


An Argosy of Fables

A Representative Selection From the
Fable Literature of Every Age and Land



FREDERIC TABER COOPER



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**AN ARGOSY OF
FABLES**



THE MOUSE REMIGHT NOT TO SPARE ONE WHO HAD SO UNCONSCIOUSLY
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A Representative Selection
From the Fable Literature
of Every Age and Land

Selected and Edited by
FREDERIC TABER COOPER



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PART I

ÆSOP

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES



FOX, just at the time of the vintage, stole into a vineyard where the ripe sunny Grapes were trellised up on high in most tempting show. He made many a spring and a jump after the luscious prize; but, failing in all his attempts, he muttered as he retreated, "Well! What does it matter! The Grapes are sour!"

(Fable 33 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BOWMAN AND THE LION

A MAN who was very skilful with his bow, went up into the mountains to hunt. At his approach there was instantly a great consternation and rout among all the wild beasts, the Lion alone showing any determination to fight. "Stop," said the Bowman to him, "and await my messenger, who has somewhat to say to you." With that he sent an arrow after the Lion, and wounded him in the side. The Lion, smarting with anguish, fled into the depth of the thickets, but a Fox seeing him run, bade him take courage, and face his enemy. "No," said the Lion, "you will not persuade me to that; for if the messenger he sends is so sharp, what must be the power of him who sends it?"

(Fable 403 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A WOLF had got a bone stuck in his throat, and in the greatest agony ran up and down, beseeching every animal he met to relieve him: at the same time hinting at a very handsome reward to the successful operator. A Crane, moved by his entreaties and promises, ventured her long neck down the Wolf's throat, and drew out the bone. She then modestly asked for the promised reward. To which, the Wolf, grinning and showing his teeth, replied with seeming indignation, "Ungrateful creature! to ask for any other reward than that you have put your head into a Wolf's jaws, and brought it safe out again!"

Those who are charitable only in the hope of a return, must not be surprised if, in their dealings with evil men, they meet with more jeers than thanks.

(Fable 276 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BOY AND THE SCORPION

A BOY was hunting Locusts upon a wall, and had caught a great number of them; when, seeing a Scorpion, he mistook it for another Locust, and was first hollowing his hand to catch it, when the Scorpion, lifting up his sting, said: "I wish you had done it, for I would soon have made you drop me, and the Locusts into the bargain."

(Fable 350 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A FOX had fallen into a well, and had been casting about for a long time how he should get out again; when at length a Goat came to the place, and wanting to drink, asked Reynard whether the water was good, and if there was plenty of it. The Fox, dissembling the real danger of his case, replied, "Come down, my friend; the water is so good that I cannot drink enough of it, and so abundant that it cannot be exhausted." Upon this the Goat without any more ado leaped in; but after satisfying his thirst, he asked the Fox how they were to get out of the well. The Fox replied that it would be quite simple if they helped each other; "If you will rear up and place your front feet against the side of the well and bend your horns forward, I can easily mount on your back and climb out." The Goat did as he was told and the Fox nimbly climbed up his back and with one jump from the Goat's horns, was safely out of the well. "Now it is your turn to help me out," said the Goat. But the Fox, leaving him in the lurch, called back, "My friend, if you had half as much brains as you have beard, you would have looked before you leaped."

(Fable 45 Halm; Adapted from Thomas James' translation.)

THE WIDOW AND THE HEN

A WIDOW kept a Hen that laid an egg every morning. Thought the woman to herself, "If I double my Hen's allowance of barley, she will lay twice a-day." So she tried her plan, and the Hen became so fat and sleek, that she left off laying at all.

(Fable 111 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MAN AND THE SATYR

A MAN and a Satyr having struck up an acquaintance sat down together to eat. The day being wintry and cold, the Man put his fingers to his mouth and blew upon them. "What's that for, my friend?" asked the Satyr. "My hands are so cold," said the Man; "I do it to warm them." In a little while some hot food was placed before them, and the Man, raising the dish to his mouth, again blew upon it. "And what's the meaning of that, now?" said the Satyr. "Oh," replied the Man, "my porridge is so hot, I do it to cool it." "Nay, then," said the Satyr, "from this moment I renounce your friendship, for I will have nothing to do with one who blows hot and cold with the same mouth."

(Fable 64 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FLIES AND THE HONEY-POT

A POT of Honey having been upset in a grocer's shop, the Flies came around it in swarms to eat it up, nor would they move from the spot while there was a drop left. At length their feet became so clogged that they could not fly away, and, stifled in the luscious sweets, they exclaimed, "Miserable creatures that we are, who for the sake of an hour's pleasure, have thrown away our lives!"

(Fable 293 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MOUSE AND THE FROG

A MOUSE in an evil day made acquaintance with a Frog, and they set off on their travels together. The Frog, on pretence of great affection, and of keeping his companion out of harm's

way, tied the Mouse's fore-foot to his own hind-leg, and thus they proceeded for some distance by land. Presently they came to some water, and the Frog, bidding the Mouse have good courage, began to swim across. They had scarcely, however, arrived midway, when the Frog took a sudden plunge to the bottom, dragging the unfortunate Mouse after him. But the struggling and floundering of the Mouse made so great commotion in the water that it attracted the attention of a Kite, who, pouncing down, and bearing off the Mouse, carried away the Frog at the same time in his train.

Inconsiderate and ill-matched alliances generally end in ruin; and the man who compasses the destruction of his neighbour, is often caught in his own snare.

(Fable 298 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW

A DOG had stolen a piece of meat out of a butcher's shop, and was crossing a river on his way home, when he saw his own shadow reflected in the stream below. Thinking that it was another dog with another piece of meat, he resolved to make himself master of that also; but in snapping at the supposed treasure, he dropped the bit he was carrying, and so lost all.

Those who grasp at the shadow are likely to lose the substance.

(Fable 233 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FOX AND THE LION

A FOX who had never seen a Lion, when by chance he met him for the first time, was so terrified that he almost died of fright. When he met him the second time, he was still afraid, but managed to disguise his fear. When he saw him the third time, he was so much emboldened that he went up to him and asked him how he did.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

(Fable 39 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

AS a Wolf was lapping at the head of a running brook, he spied a stray Lamb paddling, at some distance, down the stream. Having made up his mind to seize her, he bethought himself how he might justify his violence. "Villain!" said he, running up to her, "how dare you muddle the water that I am drinking?" "Indeed," said the Lamb humbly, "I do not see how I can disturb the water, since it runs from you to me, not from me to you." "Be that as it may," replied the Wolf, "it was but a year ago that you called me many ill names." "Oh, Sir!" said the Lamb, trembling, "a year ago I was not born." "Well," replied the Wolf, "if it was not you, it was your father, and that is all the same; but it is no use trying to argue me out of my supper;"—and without another word he fell upon the poor helpless Lamb and tore her to pieces.

A tyrant can always find plenty of excuses for his wicked deeds.

(Fable 274 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BEAR AND THE FOX

A BEAR used to boast of his excessive love for Man, saying that he never worried or mauled him when dead. The Fox observed, with a smile, "I shouldn't so much care what you did to Man after he was dead, if you never ate him alive."

(Fable 69 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE TOWN MOUSE

ONCE upon a time a Country Mouse who had a friend in town invited him, for old acquaintance sake, to pay him a visit in the country. The invitation being accepted in due form, the Country Mouse, though plain and rough and somewhat frugal in his nature, opened his heart and store, in honour of hospitality and an old friend. There was not a carefully stored up morsel that he did not bring forth out of his larder, peas and barley, cheese-parings and nuts, hoping by quantity to make up what he feared was wanting in quality, to suit the palate of his dainty guest. The Town Mouse, condescending to pick a bit here and a bit there, while the host sat nibbling a blade of barley-straw, at length exclaimed, "How is it, my good friend, that you can endure the dullness of this unpolished life? You are living like a toad in a hole. You can't really prefer these solitary rocks and woods to streets teeming with carriages and men. On my honour, you are wasting your time miserably here. We must make the most of life while it lasts. A mouse, you know, does not live for ever. So come with me and I'll

show you life and the town." Overpowered with such fine words and so polished a manner, the Country Mouse assented; and they set out together on their journey to town. It was late in the evening when they crept stealthily into the city, and midnight ere they reached the great house, where the Town Mouse took up his quarters. Here were couches of crimson velvet, carvings in ivory, everything in short that denoted wealth and luxury. On the table were the remains of a splendid banquet, to procure which all the choicest shops in the town had been ransacked the day before. It was now the turn of the courtier to play the host; he places his country friend on purple, runs to and fro to supply all his wants, presses dish upon dish and dainty upon dainty, and as though he were waiting on a king, tastes every course ere he ventures to place it before his rustic cousin. The Country Mouse, for his part, affects to make himself quite at home, and blesses the good fortune that had wrought such a change in his way of life; when, in the midst of his enjoyment, as he is thinking with contempt of the poor fare he has forsaken, on a sudden the door flies open, and a party of revellers returning from a late entertainment, bursts into the room. The affrightened friends jump from the table in the greatest consternation and hide themselves in the first corner they can reach. No sooner do they venture to creep out again than the barking of dogs drive them back in still greater terror than before. At length, when things seemed quiet, the Country Mouse stole out from his hiding place, and bidding his friend good-bye, whispered in his ear, "Oh, my good sir, this fine mode of living may do for those who like it; but give me my barley-bread in peace and security before the daintiest feast where Fear and Care are in waiting."

(Fable 297 b. Halm; Adapted and amplified by Thomas James.)

THE DOG, THE COCK AND THE FOX

A DOG and a Cock having struck up an acquaintance, went out on their travels together. Nightfall found them in a forest; so the Cock, flying up on a tree, perched among the branches, while the Dog dozed below at the foot. As the night passed away and the day dawned, the Cock, according to his custom, set up a shrill crowing. A Fox hearing him, and thinking to make a meal of him, came and stood under the tree, and thus addressed him:—"Thou art a good little bird, and most useful to thy fellow-creatures. Come down, then, that we may sing our matins and rejoice together." The Cock replied, "Go, my good friend, to the foot of the tree, and call the sacrilegious to toll the bell." But as the Fox went to call him, the Dog jumped out in a moment, and seized the Fox and made an end of him.

They who lay traps for others are often caught by their own bait.

(Fable 225 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

✓ A LION was sleeping in his lair, when a Mouse, not knowing where he was going, ran over the mighty beast's nose and awakened him. The Lion clapped his paw upon the frightened little creature, and was about to make an end of him in a moment, when the Mouse, in pitiable tones, besought him to spare one who had so unconsciously offended, and not stain his honourable paws with so insignificant a prey. The Lion smiling at his little prisoner's fright, generously let him go. Now it happened no long time after, that the Lion, while ranging the woods for his prey, fell into the toils of the hunters; and finding himself entangled without hope of escape, set

up a roar that filled the whole forest with its echo. The Mouse, recognising the voice of his former preserver, ran to the spot, and without more ado set to work to nibble the knot in the cord that bound the Lion, and in a short time set the noble beast at liberty; thus convincing him that kindness is seldom thrown away, and that there is no creature so much below another but that he may have it in his power to return a good office.

(Fable 256 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE GULL AND THE KITE

A GULL had pounced upon a fish, and in endeavouring to swallow it got choked, and lay upon the deck for dead. A Kite who was passing by and saw him, gave him no other comfort than—"It serves you right: for what business have the fowls of the air to meddle with the fish of the sea?"

(Fable 239 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE POMEGRANATE, THE APPLE AND THE BRAMBLE

THE Pomegranate and the Apple had a contest on the score of beauty. When words ran high and the strife waxed dangerous, a Bramble, thrusting his head from a neighbouring bush, cried out, "We have disputed long enough; let there be no more rivalry betwixt us."

The most insignificant creatures are generally the most presuming.

(Fable 385 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE TORTOISE AND THE EAGLE

A TORTOISE, dissatisfied with his lowly life, when he beheld so many of the birds, his neighbours, disporting themselves in the clouds, and thinking that, if he could but once get up into the air, he could soar with the best of them, called one day upon an Eagle and offered him all the treasures of the Ocean if he could only teach him to fly. The Eagle would have declined the task, assuring him that the thing was not only absurd but impossible, but being further pressed by the entreaties and promises of the Tortoise, he at length consented to do for him the best he could. So taking him up to a great height in the air loosing his hold upon him, "Now, then!" cried the Eagle; but the Tortoise, before he could answer him a word, fell plump upon a rock, and was dashed to pieces.

Pride shall have a fall.

(Fable 419 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

A HARE jeered at a Tortoise for the slowness of his pace. But he laughed and said, that he would run against her and beat her any day she would name. "Come on," said the Hare, "you shall soon see what my feet are made of." So it was agreed that they should start at once. The Tortoise went off jogging along, without a moment's stopping, at his usual steady pace. The Hare, treating the whole matter very lightly, said she would first take a little nap, and that she should soon overtake the Tortoise. Meanwhile the Tortoise

plodded on, and the Hare oversleeping herself, arrived at the goal, only to see that the Tortoise had got in before her.

Slow and steady wins the race.

(Fable 420 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HEN AND THE CAT

A CAT hearing that a Hen was laid up sick in her nest, paid her a visit of condolence; and creeping up to her said, "How are you, my dear friend? what can I do for you? what are you in want of? Only tell me, if there is anything in the world that I can bring you; but keep up your spirits, and don't be alarmed." "Thank you," said the Hen; "do you be good enough to leave me, and I have no fear but I shall soon be well."

Unbidden guests are often welcomest when they are gone.

(Fable 16 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SHEPHERD-BOY AND THE WOLF

A SHEPHERD-BOY, who tended his flock not far from a village, used to amuse himself at times in crying out "Wolf! Wolf!" Twice or thrice his trick succeeded. The whole village came running out to his assistance; when all the return they got was to be laughed at for their pains. At last one day the Wolf came indeed. The Boy cried out in earnest. But his neighbours, supposing him to be at his old sport, paid no heed to his cries, and the Wolf devoured the Sheep. So the Boy learned, when it was too late, that liars are not believed even when they tell the truth.

(Fable 353 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SICK STAG

A STAG that had fallen sick, lay down on the rich herbage of a lawn, close to a wood-side, that she might obtain an easy pasturage. But so many of the beasts came to see her—for she was a good sort of neighbour—that one taking a little, and another a little, they ate up all the grass in the place. So, though recovering from her disease, she pined for want, and in the end lost both her substance and her life.

(Fable 131 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MOON AND HER MOTHER

THE Moon once asked her Mother to make her a little cloak that would fit her well. "How" replied she, "can I make you a cloak to fit you, who are now a New Moon, and then a Full Moon, and then again neither one nor the other?"

(Fable 389 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS AND THE GRASSHOPPERS

AN Ass hearing some Grasshoppers chirping, was delighted with the music, and determining, if he could, to rival them, asked them what it was they fed upon to make them sing so sweetly? When they told him that they supped upon nothing but dew, the Ass betook himself to the same diet, and soon died of hunger.

One man's meat is another man's poison.

(Fable 337 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FOX AND THE WOODMAN

A FOX, hard pressed by the hounds after a long run, came up to a man who was cutting wood, and begged him to afford some place where he might hide himself. The man showed him his own hut, and the Fox creeping in, hid himself in a corner. The Hunters presently came up, and asking the man whether he had seen the Fox, "No," said he, but pointed with his finger to the corner. They, however, not understanding the hint, were off again immediately. When the Fox perceived that they were out of sight, he was stealing off without saying a word. But the man upbraided him, saying, "Is this the way you take leave of your host, without a word of thanks for your safety?" "A pretty host!" said the Fox, turning round upon him, "if you had been as honest with your fingers as you were with your tongue, I should not have left your roof without bidding you farewell."

There is as much malice in a wink as in a word.

(Fable 35 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LAMB AND THE WOLF

A LAMB pursued by a Wolf took refuge in a temple. Upon this the Wolf called out to him, and said, that the priest would slay him if he caught him. "Be it so," said the Lamb: "it is better to be sacrificed to God, than to be devoured by you."

(Fable 273 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

JUPITER AND THE CAMEL

WHEN the Camel, in days of yore, besought Jupiter to grant him horns, for that it was a great grief to him to see other animals furnished with them, while he had none; Jupiter not only refused to give him the horns he asked for, but cropped his ears short for his importunity.

By asking too much, we may lose the little that we had before.

(Fable 184 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE CRAB AND HER MOTHER

SAID an old Crab to a young one, "Why do you walk so crooked, child? walk straight!" "Mother," said the young Crab, "show me the way, will you? and when I see you taking a straight course, I will try and follow."

Example is better than precept.

(Fable 187 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ONE-EYED DOE

A DOE that had but one eye used to graze near the sea, and that she might be the more secure from attack, kept her eye towards the land against the approach of the hunters, and her blind side towards the sea, whence she feared no danger. But some sailors rowing by in a boat and seeing her, aimed at her from the water and shot her. When at her last gasp, she sighed to herself: "Ill-fated crea-

ture that I am! I was safe on the land-side whence I expected to be attacked, but find an enemy in the sea to which I most looked for protection."

Our troubles often come from the quarter whence we least expect them.

(Fable 126 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION AND THE FOX

A FOX agreed to wait upon a Lion in the capacity of a servant. Each for a time performed the part belonging to his station; the Fox used to point out the prey, and the Lion fell upon it and seized it. But the Fox, beginning to think himself as good a beast as his master, begged to be allowed to hunt the game instead of finding it. His request was granted, but as he was in the act of making a descent upon a herd, the huntsman came out upon him, and he was himself made the prize.

Keep to your place, and your place will keep you.

(Fable 41 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR

TWO friends were travelling on the same road together, when they met with a Bear. The one in great fear, without a thought of his companion, climbed up into a tree, and hid himself. The other seeing that he had no chance, single-handed, against the Bear, had nothing left but to throw himself on the ground and feign to be dead; for he had heard that the Bear will never touch a dead body. As he

thus lay, the Bear came up to his head, muzzling and snuffing at his nose, and ears, and heart, but the man immovably held his breath, and the beast supposing him to be dead, walked away. When the Bear was fairly out of sight, his companion came down out of the tree, and asked what it was that the Bear whispered to him,—“for,” says he, “I observed he put his mouth very close to your ear.” “Why,” replied the other, “it was no great secret; he only bade me have a care how I kept company with those who, when they get into a difficulty, leave their friends in the lurch.”

(Fable 311 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE COLLIER AND THE FULLER

A COLLIER who had more room in his house than he wanted for himself, proposed to a Fuller to come and take up his quarters with him. “Thank you,” said the Fuller, “but I must decline your offer; for I fear that as fast as I whiten my goods you will blacken them again.”

There can be little liking where there is no likeness.

(Fable 59 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION, THE ASS AND THE FOX HUNTING

THE Lion, the Ass, and the Fox formed a party to go out hunting. They took a large booty, and when the sport was ended be thought themselves of having a hearty meal. The Lion bade the Ass allot the spoil. So dividing it into three equal parts, the Ass begged his friends to make their choice; at which the Lion, in great indigna-

tion, fell upon the ass, and tore him to pieces. He then bade the Fox make a division; who, gathering the whole into one great heap, reserved but the smallest mite for himself. "Ah! friend," says the Lion, "who taught you to make so equitable a division?" "I wanted no other lesson," replied the Fox, "than the Ass's fate."

Better be wise by the misfortunes of others than by your own.

(Fable 260 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS AND THE LAP-DOG

THERE was an Ass and a Lap-dog that belonged to the same master. The Ass was tied up in the stable, and had plenty of corn and hay to eat, and was as well off as Ass could be. The little Dog was always sporting and gambolling about, caressing and fawning upon his master in a thousand amusing ways, so that he became a great favourite, and was permitted to lie in his master's lap. The Ass, indeed, had enough to do; he was drawing wood all day, and had to take his turn at the mill at night. But while he grieved over his own lot, it galled him more to see the Lap-dog living in such ease and luxury; so thinking that if he acted a like part to his master, he should fare the same, he broke one day from his halter, and rushing into the hall began to kick and prance about in the strangest fashion; then swishing his tail and mimicking the frolics of the favourite, he upset the table where his master was at dinner, breaking it in two and smashing all the crockery; nor would he leave off till he jumped upon his master, and pawed him with his rough-shod feet. The servants, seeing their master in no little danger, thought it was now high time to interfere, and having released him from the Ass's caresses, they so belaboured the silly creature with sticks and staves, that he never got

up again; and as he breathed his last, exclaimed, "Why could not I have been satisfied with my natural position, without attempting, by tricks and grimaces, to imitate one who was but a puppy after all!"

(Fable 331 Halm; Adapted and expanded by Thomas James.)

THE WIND AND THE SUN

A DISPUTE once arose between the Wind and the Sun, which was the stronger of the two, and they agreed to put the point upon this issue, that whichever soonest made a traveller take off his cloak, should be accounted the more powerful. The Wind began, and blew with all his might and main a blast, cold and fierce as a Thracian storm; but the stronger he blew the closer the traveller wrapped his cloak around him, and the tighter he grasped it with his hands. Then broke out the Sun: with his welcome beams he dispersed the vapour and the cold; the traveller felt the genial warmth, and as the Sun shone brighter and brighter, he sat down, overcome with the heat, and cast his cloak on the ground.

Thus the Sun was declared the conqueror; and it has ever been deemed that persuasion is better than force; and that the sunshine of a kind and gentle manner will sooner lay open a poor man's heart than all the threatenings and force of blustering authority.

(Fable 82 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION IN LOVE

IT happened in days of old that a Lion fell in love with a Woodman's daughter; and had the folly to ask her of her father in marriage. The Woodman was not much pleased with the offer, and declined the honour of so dangerous an alliance. But upon the Lion threatening

him with his royal displeasure, the poor man, seeing that so formidable a creature was not to be denied, hit at length upon this expedient: "I feel greatly flattered," said he, "with your proposal; but, noble sir, what great teeth you have got! and what great claws you have got! Where is the damsel that would not be frightened at such weapons as these? You must have your teeth drawn and your claws pared before you can be a suitable bridegroom for my daughter." The Lion straightway submitted (for what will not a body do for love?) and then called upon the father to accept him as a son-in-law. But the Woodman, no longer afraid of the tamed and disarmed bully, seized a stout cudgel and drove the unreasonable suitor from his door.

(Fable 249 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE DOLPHINS AND THE SPRAT

THE Dolphins and the Whales were at war with one another, and while the battle was at its height, the Sprat stepped in and endeavoured to separate them. But one of the Dolphins cried out, "Let us alone, friend! We had rather perish in the contest, than be reconciled by you."

(Fable 116 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP

ONCE on a time, the Wolves sent an embassy to the Sheep, desiring that there might be peace between them for the time to come. "Why," said they, "should we be for ever waging this dreadful strife? Those wicked Dogs are the cause of all; they are inces-

santly barking at us, and provoking us. Send them away, and there will be no longer any obstacle to our eternal friendship and peace." The silly Sheep listened, the Dogs were dismissed, and the flock, thus deprived of their best protectors, became an easy prey to their treacherous enemy.

(Fable 268 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BELLY AND THE MEMBERS

IN former days, when all a man's limbs did not work together as amicably as they do now, but each had a will and a way of its own, the Members generally began to find fault with the Belly for spending an idle luxurious life, while they were wholly occupied in labouring for its support, and ministering to its wants and pleasures; so they entered into a conspiracy to cut off its supplies for the future. The Hands were no longer to carry food to the Mouth, nor the Mouth to receive the food, nor the Teeth to chew it. They had not long persisted in this course of starving the Belly into subjection, ere they all began, one by one, to fail and flag, and the whole body to pine away. Then the Members were convinced that the Belly also, cumbersome and useless as it seemed, had an important function of its own; that they could no more do without it than it could do without them; and that if they would have the constitution of the body in a healthy state, they must work together, each in his proper sphere, for the common good of all.

(Fable 197 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

HERCULES AND THE WAGGONER

AS a Countryman was carelessly driving his waggon along a miry lane, his wheels stuck so deep in the clay that the horses came to a stand-still. Upon this the man, without making the least effort of his own, began to call upon Hercules to come and help him out of his trouble. But Hercules bade him lay his shoulder to the wheel, assuring him that Heaven only aided those who endeavoured to help themselves.

It is in vain to expect our prayers to be heard, if we do not strive as well as pray.

(Fable 81 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL

A FOX being caught in a trap, was glad to compound for his neck by leaving his tail behind him; but upon coming abroad into the world, he began to be so sensible of the disgrace such a defect would bring upon him, that he almost wished he had died rather than come away without it. However, resolving to make the best of a bad matter, he called a meeting of the rest of the Foxes, and proposed that all should follow his example. "You have no notion," said he, "of the ease and comfort with which I now move about: I could never have believed it if I had not tried it myself; but really, when one comes to reason upon it, a tail is such an ugly, inconvenient, unnecessary appendage, that the only wonder is that, as Foxes, we could have put up with it so long. I propose, therefore, my worthy brethren,

that you all profit by the experience that I am most willing to afford you, and that all Foxes from this day forward cut off their tails." Upon this one of the oldest stepped forward, and said, "I rather think, my friend, that you would not have advised us to part with our tails, if there were any chance of recovering your own."

(Fable 46 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FARTHING RUSHLIGHT

A RUSHLIGHT that had grown fat and saucy with too much grease, boasted one evening before a large company, that it shone brighter than the sun, the moon, and all the stars. At that moment, a puff of wind came and blew it out. One who lighted it again said, "Shine on, friend Rushlight, and hold your tongue; the lights of heaven are never blown out."

(Fable 285 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HARES AND THE FROGS

ONCE upon a time, the Hares, driven desperate by the many enemies that compassed them about on every side, came to the sad resolution that there was nothing left for them but to make away with themselves, one and all. Off they scudded to a lake hard by, determined to drown themselves as the most miserable of creatures. A shoal of Frogs seated upon the bank, frightened at the approach of the Hares, leaped in the greatest alarm and confusion into the water. "Nay, then, my friends," said a Hare that was foremost, "our case is

not so desperate yet; for here are other poor creatures more faint-hearted than ourselves."

Take not comfort, but courage, from another's distress; and be sure, whatever your misery, that there are some whose lot you would not exchange with your own.

(Fable 237 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LIONESS

THERE was a great stir among all the Beasts, which could boast of the largest family. So they came to the Lioness. "And how many," said they, "do you have at a birth?" "One," said she, grimly; "but that one is a Lion."

Quality comes before quantity.

(Fable 240 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ANGLER AND THE LITTLE FISH

AN Angler, who gained his livelihood by fishing, after a long day's toil, caught nothing but one little fish. "Spare me," said the little creature, "I beseech you; so small as I am, I shall make you but a sorry meal. I am not come to my full size yet; throw me back into the river for the present, and then, when I am grown bigger and worth eating, you may come here and catch me again." "No, no," said the man; "I have got you now, but if you once get back into the water, your tune will be, 'Catch me, if you can.'"

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

(Fable 28 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS

A FARMER being on the point of death, and wishing to show his sons the way to success in farming, called them to him, and said, "My children, I am now departing from this life, but all I have to leave you, you will find in the vineyard." The sons, supposing that he referred to some hidden treasure, as soon as the old man died, set to work with their spades and ploughs and every implement that was at hand, and turned up the soil over and over again. They found indeed no treasure; but the vines, strengthened and improved by this thorough tillage, yielded a finer vintage than they had ever yielded before, and more than repaid the young husbandmen for all their trouble. So truly is industry in itself a treasure.

(Fable 98 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE STORK

A HUSBANDMAN fixed a net in his field to catch the Cranes that came to feed on his new-sown corn. When he went to examine the net, and see what Cranes he had taken, a Stork was found among the number. "Spare me," cried the Stork, "and let me go. I am no Crane. I have eaten none of your corn. I am a poor innocent Stork, as you may see—the most pious and dutiful of birds. I honour and succour my father and mother. I—" But the Husbandman cut him short. "All this may be true enough, I dare say, but this I

know, that I have caught you with those who were destroying my crops, and you must suffer with the company in which you are taken."

Ill company proves more than fair possessions.

(Fable 100 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE PHYSICIAN

AN old Woman, who had become blind, called in a Physician, and promised him, before witnesses, that if he would restore her eyesight, she would give him a most handsome reward, but that if he did not cure her, and her malady remained, he should receive nothing. The agreement being concluded, the Physician tampered from time to time with the old lady's eyes, and meanwhile, bit by bit, carried off her goods. At length after a time he set about the task in earnest and cured her, and thereupon asked for the stipulated fee. But the old Woman, on recovering her sight, saw none of her goods left in the house. When, therefore, the Physician importuned her in vain for payment, and she continually put him off with excuses, he summoned her at last before the Judges. Being now called upon for her defence, she said, "What this man says is true enough; I promised to give him his fee if my sight were restored, and nothing if my eyes continued bad. Now then he says that I am cured, but I say just the contrary; for when my malady first came on, I could see all sorts of furniture and goods in my house; but now, when he says he has restored my sight, I cannot see one jot of either."

He who plays a trick must be prepared to take a joke.

(Fable 107 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SWALLOW AND THE RAVEN

THE Swallow and the Raven contended which was the finer bird. The Raven ended by saying, "Your beauty is but for the summer, but mine will stand many winters."

Durability is better than show.

(Fable 415 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MONKEY AND THE DOLPHIN

IT was an old custom among sailors to carry about with them little Maltese lap-dogs, or Monkeys, to amuse them on the voyage; so it happened once upon a time that a man took with him a Monkey as a companion on board ship. While they were off Sunium, the famous promontory of Attica, the ship was caught in a violent storm, and being capsized, all on board were thrown in the water, and had to swim for land as best they could. And among them was the Monkey. A Dolphin saw him struggling, and, taking him for a man went to his assistance and bore him on his back straight for shore. When they had just got opposite Piræus, the harbour of Athens, the Dolphin asked the Monkey if he were an Athenian. "Yes," answered the Monkey, "assuredly, and of one of the first families in the place." "Then of course, you know Piræus," said the Dolphin. "Oh, yes," said the Monkey, who thought it was the name of some distinguished citizen, "He is one of my most intimate friends." Indignant at so gross a deceit and falsehood, the Dolphin dived to the bottom and left the lying Monkey to his fate.

(Fable 363 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE SHEEP

A WOLF that had been bitten by a dog, and was in a very sad case, being unable to move, called to a Sheep, that was passing by, and begged her to fetch some water from the neighbouring stream. "For if you," said he, "will bring me drink, I will find meat myself." "Yes," said the Sheep, "I make no doubt of it; for, if I come near enough to give you the drink, you will soon make mince-meat of me."

(Fable 284 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BUNDLE OF STICKS

A HUSBANDMAN who had a quarrelsome family, after having tried in vain to reconcile them by words, thought he might more readily prevail by an example. So he called his sons and bade them lay a bundle of sticks before him. Then having tied them into a faggot, he told the lads, one after the other, to take it up and break it. They all tried, but tried in vain. Then untying the faggot, he gave them the sticks to break one by one. This they did with the greatest ease. Then said the father, "Thus you, my sons, as long as you remain united, are a match for all your enemies; but differ and separate, and you are undone."

Union is strength.

(Fable 103 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WIDOW AND THE SHEEP

THERE was a certain Widow who had an only Sheep; and, wishing to make the most of his wool, she sheared him so closely that she cut his skin as well as his fleece. The Sheep, smarting under this treatment, cried out—"Why do you torture me thus? What will my blood add to the weight of the wool? If you want my flesh, Dame, send for the Butcher, who will put me out of my misery at once; but if you want my fleece, send for the Shearer, who will clip my wool without drawing my blood."

Middle measures are often but middling measures.

(Fable 382 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MAN AND THE LION

✓ **O**NCE upon a time a Man and a Lion were journeying together, and came at length to high words about which was the braver and stronger creature of the two. As the dispute waxed warmer they happened to pass by, on the road-side, a statue of a man strangling a lion. "See there," said the Man; "what more undeniable proof can you have of our superiority than that?" "That," said the Lion, "is your version of the story; let us be the sculptors, and for one lion under the feet of a man, you shall have twenty men under the paw of a lion."

Men are but sorry witnesses in their own cause.

(Fable 63 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MAN BITTEN BY A DOG

A MAN who had been bitten by a Dog, was going about asking who would cure him. One that met him said, "Sir, if you would be cured, take a bit of bread and dip it in the blood of the wound, and give it to the dog that bit you." The Man smiled, and said, "If I were to follow your advice, I should be bitten by all the dogs in the city."

He who proclaims himself ready to buy up his enemies will never want a supply of them.

(Fable 221 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HORSE AND THE STAG

A HORSE had the whole range of a meadow to himself; but a Stag coming and damaging the pasture, the Horse, anxious to have his revenge, asked a Man if he could not assist him in punishing the Stag. "Yes," said the Man, "Only let me put a bit in your mouth, and get upon your back, and I will find the weapons." The Horse agreed, and the Man mounted accordingly; but instead of getting his revenge, the Horse has been from that time forward the slave of Man.

Revenge is too dearly purchased at the price of liberty.

(Fable 175 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BIRDCATCHER AND THE LARK

A BIRDCATCHER was setting springs upon a common, when a Lark, who saw him at work, asked him from a distance what he was doing. "I am establishing a colony," said he, "and laying the foundations of my first city." Upon that, the man retired to a little distance and hid himself. The Lark, believing his assertion, soon flew down to the place, and swallowing the bait, found himself entangled in the noose; whereupon the Birdcatcher straightway coming up to him, made him his prisoner. "A pretty fellow are you!" said the Lark; "if these are the colonies you found, you will not find many emigrants."

(Fable 340 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG

THERE was a Dog so wild and mischievous, that his master was obliged to fasten a heavy clog about his neck, to prevent him biting and worrying his neighbours. The Dog, priding himself upon his badge, paraded in the market-place, shaking his clog to attract attention. But a sly friend whispered to him, "The less noise you make, the better; your mark of distinction is no reward of merit, but a badge of disgrace!"

Men often mistake notoriety for fame, and would rather be remarked for their vices or follies than not be noticed at all.

(Fable 224 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE PLANE-TREE

SOME Travellers, on a hot day in summer, oppressed with the noontide sun, perceiving a Plane-tree near at hand, made straight for it, and throwing themselves on the ground rested under its shade. Looking up, as they lay, towards the tree, they said one to another, "What a useless tree to man is this barren Plane!" But the Plane-tree answered them,—“Ungrateful creatures! at the very moment that you are enjoying benefit from me, you rail at me as being good for nothing.”

Ingratitude is as blind as it is base.

(*Fable 313 Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

JUPITER, NEPTUNE, MINERVA AND MOMUS

JUPITER, Neptune, and Minerva (as the story goes) once contended which of them should make the most perfect thing. Jupiter made a Man; Pallas made a House; and Neptune made a Bull; and Momus—for he had not yet been turned out of Olympus—was chosen judge to decide which production had the greatest merit. He began by finding fault with the Bull, because his horns were not below his eyes, so that he might see when he butted with them. Next he found fault with the Man, because there was no window in his breast that all might see his inward thoughts and feelings. And lastly he found fault with the House, because it had no wheels to enable its inhabitants to remove from bad neighbours. But Jupiter forthwith drove the critic out of heaven, telling him that a fault-finder could never be pleased, and that it was time to criticise the works of others when he had done some good thing himself.

(*Fable 155 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

MERCURY AND THE WOODMAN

A WOODMAN was felling a tree on the bank of a river, and by chance let slip his axe into the water, when it immediately sunk to the bottom. Being thereupon in great distress, he sat down by the side of the stream and lamented his loss bitterly. But Mercury, whose river it was, taking compassion on him, appeared at the instant before him; and hearing from him the cause of his sorrow, dived to the bottom of the river, and bringing up a golden axe, asked the Woodman if that were his. Upon the man's denying it, Mercury dived a second time, and brought up one of silver. Again the man denied that it was his. So diving a third time, he produced the identical axe which the man had lost. "That is mine!" said the Woodman, delighted to have recovered his own; and so pleased was Mercury with the fellow's truth and honesty, that he at once made him a present of the other two.

The man goes to his companions, and giving them an account of what had happened to him, one of them determined to try whether he might not have the like good fortune. So repairing to the same place, as if for the purpose of cutting wood, he let slip his axe on purpose into the river, and then sat down on the bank, and made a great show of weeping. Mercury appeared as before, and hearing from him that his tears were caused by the loss of his axe, dived once more into the stream; and bringing up a golden axe, asked him if that was the axe he had lost. "Aye, surely," said the man, eagerly; and he was about to grasp the treasure, when Mercury, to punish his

impudence and lying, not only refused to give him that, but would not so much as restore him his own axe again.

Honesty is the best policy.

(Fable 308 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE GEESE AND THE CRANES

SOME Geese and some Cranes fed together in the same field. One day the sportsmen came suddenly down upon them. The Cranes, being light of body, flew off in a moment and escaped; but the Geese, weighed down by their fat, were all taken.

In civil commotions, they fare best who have least to fetter them.

(Fable 421 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

JUPITER AND THE BEE

IN days of yore, when the world was young, a Bee that had stored her combs with a bountiful harvest, flew up to heaven to present as a sacrifice an offering of honey. Jupiter was so delighted with the gift, that he promised to give her whatsoever she should ask for. She therefore besought him, saying, "O glorious Jove, maker and master of me, poor Bee, give thy servant a sting, that when any one approaches my hive to take the honey, I will kill him on the spot." Jupiter, out of love to man, was angry at her request, and thus answered her: "Your prayer shall not be granted in the way you wish, but the sting which you ask for you shall have; and when any one comes to take away your honey and you attack him, the wound shall

be fatal not to him but to you, for your life shall go with your sting."

He that prays harm for his neighbour, begs a curse upon himself.

(*Fable 287 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE GOATHERD AND THE GOATS

✓ **I**T was a stormy day, and the snow was falling fast, when a Goatherd drove his Goats, all white with snow, into a desert cave for shelter. There he found that a herd of Wild-goats, more numerous and larger than his own, had already taken possession. So, thinking to secure them all, he left his own Goats to take care of themselves, and threw the branches which he had brought for them to the Wild-goats to browse on. But when the weather cleared up, he found his own Goats had perished from hunger, while the Wild-goats were off and away to the hills and woods. So the Goatherd returned a laughing-stock to his neighbours, having failed to gain the Wild-goats, and having lost his own.

They who neglect their old friends for the sake of new, are rightly served if they lose both.

(*Fable 12 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE MARRIAGE OF THE SUN

ONCE upon a time, in a very warm summer, it was currently reported that the Sun was going to be married. All the birds and beasts were delighted at the thought; and the Frogs, above all others, were determined to have a good holiday. But an old Toad put a stop to their festivities by observing that it was an occasion for

sorrow rather than joy. "For if," said he, "the Sun of himself now parches up the marshes so that we can hardly bear it, what will become of us if he should have a dozen little Suns in addition?"

(*Fable 77 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE GNAT AND THE BULL

A GNAT that had been buzzing about the head of a Bull, at length settling himself down upon his horn, begged his pardon for incommoding him; "but if," says he, "my weight at all inconveniences you, pray say so and I will be off in a moment." "Oh, never trouble your head about that," says the Bull, "for 'tis all one to me whether you go or stay; and, to say the truth, I did not know you were there."

The smaller the Mind the greater the Conceit.

(*Fable 235 Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE EAGLE AND THE ARROW

A BOWMAN took aim at an Eagle and hit him in the heart. As the Eagle turned his head in the agonies of death, he saw that the Arrow was winged with his own feathers. "How much sharper," said he, "are the wounds made by weapons which we ourselves have supplied!"

(*Fable 4 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE LION AND THE DOLPHIN

A LION was roaring on the sea-shore, when, seeing a Dolphin basking on the surface of the water, he invited him to form an alliance with him, "for," said he, "as I am the king of the beasts, and you are the king of the fishes, we ought to be the greatest friends and allies possible." The Dolphin gladly assented; and the Lion, not long after, having a fight with a wild bull, called upon the Dolphin for his promised support. But when he, though ready to assist him, found himself unable to come out of the sea for the purpose, the Lion accused him of having betrayed him. "Do not blame me," said the Dolphin in reply, "but blame my nature, which however powerful at sea, is altogether helpless on land."

In choosing allies we must look to their power as well as to their will to aid us.

(Fable 251 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FOX AND THE HEDGEHOG

A FOX, while crossing over a river, was driven by the stream into a narrow gorge, and lay there for a long time unable to get out, covered with myriads of horse-flies that had fastened themselves upon him. A Hedgehog, who was wandering in that direction, saw him, and, taking compassion on him, asked him if he should drive away the flies that were so tormenting him. But the Fox begged him to do nothing of the sort. "Why not?" asked the Hedgehog. "Because," replied the Fox, "these flies that are upon me now, are already full,

TH

... a swarm of
... have a drop of blood

A DOG made it his business to keep the sheep from straying. To those who have already made their way, he said, "I will allow them to go their way, but I will keep them from straying." "What will you do if they do stray?" "I will allow them to go their way, but I will keep them from straying." "What will you do if they do stray?" "I will allow them to go their way, but I will keep them from straying."

THE PRISONER

A PRISONER in a battle, begged hard for his life. "I beseech you," said he, "and I have killed no one myself, nor have I killed any of my men." "For that very reason," said the victor, "I will let you live. You shall die sooner, for without you I shall have no one to war against."

... worse than he who takes part in it.

(Fable 125 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FIR AND THE BRAMBLE

ONE DAY a Bramble was boasting itself to a Fir. "You are a very useful tree," said the Bramble, "but how could barns and houses be built without you?" "And you are a very useful tree," said the Fir, "but how could you live without me?" "And you are a very useful tree," said the Bramble, "but how could you live without me?" "And you are a very useful tree," said the Fir, "but how could you live without me?"

... in security is better than the dangers that encompass
... haughty.

(Fable 125 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION AND THE GOAT

ON a summer's day, when everything was suffering from extreme heat, a Lion and a Goat came at the same time to quench their thirst at a small fountain. They at once fell to quarrelling which should first drink of the water, till at length it seemed that each was determined to resist the other even to death. But, ceasing from the strife for a moment, to recover breath, they saw a flock of vultures hovering over them, only waiting to pounce upon whichever of them should fall. Whereupon they instantly made up their quarrel, agreeing that it was far better for them both to become friends, than to furnish food for the crows and vultures.

(Fable 253 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERD

A WOLF had long hung about a flock of sheep, and had done them no harm. The Shepherd, however, had his suspicions, and for a while was always on the look-out against him as an avowed enemy. But when the Wolf continued for a long time following in the train of his flock without the least attempt to annoy them, he began to look upon him more as a friend than a foe; and having one day occasion to go into the city, he intrusted the sheep to his care. The Wolf no sooner saw his opportunity than he forthwith fell upon the sheep and worried them; and the Shepherd, on his return, seeing

his flock destroyed, exclaimed, "Fool that I am! yet I deserved no less for trusting my Sheep with a Wolf!"

There is more danger from a pretended friend than from an open enemy.

(Fable 283 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE HATCHET

TWO men were travelling along the same road, when one of them picking up a hatchet cries, "See what I have found!" "Do not say *I*," says the other, "but *WE* have found." After a while, up came the men who had lost the hatchet, and charged the man who had it with the theft. "Alas," says he to his companion, "we are undone!" "Do not say *WE*," replies the other, "but *I* am undone; for he that will not allow his friend to share the prize, must not expect him to share the danger."

(Fable 309 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS, THE FOX AND THE LION

AN Ass and a Fox having made a compact alliance, went out into the fields to hunt. They met a Lion on the way. The Fox seeing the impending danger, made up to the Lion, and whispered that he would betray the Ass into his power, if he would promise to bear him harmless. The Lion having agreed to do so, the Fox contrived to lead the Ass into a snare. The Lion no sooner saw the Ass secured, than he fell at once upon the Fox, reserving the other for his next meal.

(Fable 326 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION AND ASS HUNTING ✓

A LION and an Ass made an agreement to go out hunting together. By-and-by they came to a cave, where many wild goats abode. The Lion took up his station at the mouth of the cave, and the Ass, going within, kicked and brayed and made a mighty fuss to frighten them out. When the Lion had caught very many of them, the Ass came out and asked him if he had not made a noble fight, and routed the goats properly. "Yes, indeed," said the Lion; "and I assure you, you would have frightened me too, if I had not known you to be an Ass."

When braggarts are admitted into the company of their betters, it is only to be made use of and be laughed at.

(Fable 259 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS AND HIS DRIVER

A N Ass that was being driven along the road by his Master, started on ahead, and, leaving the beaten track, made as fast as he could for the edge of a precipice. When he was just on the point of falling over, his Master ran up, and, seizing him by the tail, endeavoured to pull him back; but the Ass resisting and pulling the contrary way, the man let go his hold, saying, "Well, Jack, if you will be master, I cannot help it. A wilful beast must go his own way."

(Fable 335 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MICE AND THE WEASELS

THE Mice and Weasels had long been at war with each other, and the Mice being worsted in battle, at length agreed at a meeting, solemnly called for the occasion, that their defeat was attributable to nothing but their want of discipline, and they determined accordingly to elect regular Commanders for the time to come. So they chose those whose valour and prowess most recommended them to the important post. The new Commanders, proud of their position, and desirous of being as conspicuous as possible, bound horns upon their foreheads as a sort of crest and mark of distinction. Not long after a battle ensued. The Mice, as before, were soon put to flight; the common herd escaped into their holes, but the Commanders, not being able to get in from the length of their horns, were every one caught and devoured.

There is no distinction without its accompanying danger.

(Fable 291 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HART AND THE VINE

A HART, pursued by hunters, concealed himself among the branches of a Vine. The hunters passed by without discovering him, and when he thought that all was safe, he began browsing upon the leaves that had concealed him. But one of the hunters, attracted by the rustling, turned round, and guessing that their prey was there, shot into the bush and killed him. As he was dying, he groaned out these words: "I suffer justly for my ingratitude, who could not forbear injuring the Vine that had protected me in time of danger."

(Fable 127 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

Horse's back, made him carry the Ass's carcase in addition. "Alas, for my ill nature!" said the Horse; "by refusing to bear my just portion of the load, I have now to carry the whole of it, with a dead weight into the bargain."

A disobliging temper carries its own punishment along with it.

(Fable 177 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SICK LION

A LION, no longer able, from the weakness of old age, to hunt for his prey, laid himself up in his den, and, breathing with great difficulty, and speaking with a low voice, gave out that he was very ill indeed. The report soon spread among the beasts, and there was great lamentation for the sick Lion. One after the other came to see him; but, catching them thus alone, and in his own den, the Lion made an easy prey of them, and grew fat upon his diet. The Fox, suspecting the truth of the matter, came at length to make his visit of inquiry, and standing at some distance, asked his Majesty how he did. "Ah, my dearest friend," said the Lion, "is it you? Why do you stand so far from me? Come, sweet friend, and pour a word of consolation in the poor Lion's ear, who has but a short time to live." "Bless you!" said the Fox, "but excuse me if I cannot stay; for, to tell the truth, I feel quite uneasy at the mark of the footsteps that I see here, all pointing towards your den, and none returning outwards."

Affairs are easier of entrance than of exit; and it is but common prudence to see our way out before we venture in.

(Fable 246 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE EAGLE AND THE JACKDAW

AN Eagle made a swoop from a high rock, and carried off a lamb. A Jackdaw, who saw the exploit, thinking that he could do the like, bore down with all the force he could muster upon a ram, intending to bear him off as a prize. But his claws becoming entangled in the wool, he made such a fluttering in his efforts to escape, that the shepherd, seeing through the whole matter, came up and caught him, and having clipped his wings, carried him home to his children at nightfall. "What bird is this, father, that you have brought us?" exclaimed the children. "Why," said he, "if you ask himself, he will tell you that he is an Eagle; but if you will take my word for it, I know him to be but a Jackdaw."

(Fable 8 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE THIRSTY PIGEON

APIGEON severely pressed by thirst, seeing a glass of water painted upon a sign, supposed it to be real; so dashing down at it with all her might, she struck against the board, and, breaking her wing, fell helpless to the ground, where she was quickly captured by one of the passers-by.

Great haste is not always good speed.

(Fable 357 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HEIFER AND THE OX

A HEIFER that ran wild in the fields and had never felt the yoke, upbraided an Ox at plough for submitting to such labour and drudgery. The Ox said nothing, but went on with his work. Not long after, there was a great festival. The Ox got his holiday: but the Heifer was led off to be sacrificed at the altar. "If this be the end of your idleness," said the Ox, "I think that my work is better than your play. I had rather my neck felt the yoke than the axe."

(Fable 113 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BALD KNIGHT

✓ A CERTAIN Knight growing old, his hair fell off, and he became bald; to hide which imperfection, he wore a periwig. But as he was riding out with some others a-hunting a sudden gust of wind blew off the periwig, and exposed his bald pate. The company could not forbear laughing at the accident; and he himself laughed as loud as anybody, saying, "How was it to be expected that I should keep strange hair upon my head, when my own would not stay there?"

(Fable 410 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FOX AND THE STORK

A FOX one day invited a Stork to dinner, and being disposed to divert himself at the expense of his guest, provided nothing for the entertainment but some thin soup in a shallow dish. This the Fox lapped up very readily, while the Stork, unable to gain a mouthful with her long narrow bill was as hungry at the end of dinner as when

she began. The Fox meanwhile professed his regret at seeing her eat so sparingly, and feared that the dish was not seasoned to her mind. The Stork said little, but begged that the Fox would do her the honour of returning her visit; and accordingly he agreed to dine with her on the following day. He arrived true to his appointment, and the dinner was ordered forthwith; but when it was served up, he found to his dismay that it was contained in a narrow-necked vessel, down which the Stork readily thrust her long neck and bill, while he was obliged to content himself with licking the neck of the jar. Unable to satisfy his hunger, he retired with as good a grace as he could, observing that he could hardly find fault with his entertainer, who had only paid him back in his own coin.

(Fable 34 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FALCONER AND THE PARTRIDGE

A FALCONER having taken a Partridge in his net, the bird cried out sorrowfully, "Let me go, good Master Falconer, and I promise you I will decoy other Partridges into your net." "No," said the man, "whatever I might have done, I am determined now not to spare you; for there is no death too bad for him who is ready to betray his friends."

(Fable 356 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BULL AND THE GOAT

A BULL being pursued by a Lion, fled into a cave where a wild Goat had taken up his abode. The Goat upon this began molesting him and butting at him with his horns. "Don't suppose,"

said the Bull, "if I suffer this now, it is you I am afraid of. Let the Lion be once out of sight, and I will soon show you the difference between a Bull and a Goat."

Mean people take advantage of their neighbours' difficulties to annoy them; but the time will come when they will repent them of their insolence.

(Fable 396 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE SEA

A HUSBANDMAN seeing a ship full of sailors tossed about up and down upon the billows, cried out, "O Sea! deceitful and pitiless element, that destroyest all who venture upon thee!" The Sea heard him, and assuming a woman's voice replied, "Do not reproach me; I am not the cause of this disturbance, but the Winds, that when they fall upon me will give no repose. But should you sail over me when they are away, you will say that I am milder and more tractable than your own mother earth."

(Fable 94 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE JACKASS IN OFFICE

A N Ass carrying an Image in a religious procession, was driven through a town, and all the people who passed by made a low reverence. Upon this, the Ass supposing that they intended this worship for himself, was mightily puffed up, and would not budge

another step. But the driver soon laid the stick across his back, saying at the same time, "You silly dolt! it is not you that they reverence, but the Image which you carry."

Fools take to themselves the respect that is given to their office.

(Fable 324 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE LION

ONE day a Wolf had seized a sheep from a fold, and was carrying it home to his own den, when he met a Lion, who straightway laid hold of the sheep and bore it away. The Wolf, standing at a distance, cried out, that it was a great shame, and that the Lion had robbed him of his own. The Lion laughed, and said, "I suppose, then, that it was your good friend the shepherd who gave it to you."

(Fable 279 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HOUND AND THE HARE

A HOUND after long chasing a Hare at length came up to her, and kept first biting and then licking her. The Hare, not knowing what to make of him, said: "If you are a friend, why do you bite me?—but if a foe, why caress me?"

A doubtful friend is worse than a certain enemy. Let a man be one thing or the other, and we then know how to meet him.

(Fable 229 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE KID AND THE WOLF

A KID that had strayed from the herd was pursued by a Wolf. When she saw all other hope of escape was cut off, she turned round to the Wolf, and said, "I must allow indeed that I am your

victim, but as my life is now but short, let it be a merry one. Do you pipe for a while, and I will dance." While the Wolf was piping and the Kid was dancing, the Dogs hearing the music ran up to see what was going on, and the Wolf was glad to take himself off as fast as his legs would carry him.

He who steps out of his way to play the fool, must not wonder if he misses the prize.

(Fable 134 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE QUACK FROG

A FROG emerging from the mud of a swamp, proclaimed to all the world that he was come to cure all diseases. "Here!" he cried, "come and see a doctor, the proprietor of medicines such as man never heard of before; no, not Æsculapius himself, Jove's court-physician!" "And how," said the Fox, "dare you set up to heal others, who are not able to cure your own limping gait, and blotched and wrinkled skin?"

(Fable 78 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ANT AND THE DOVE

A N Ant went to a fountain to quench his thirst, and tumbling in, was almost drowned. But a Dove that happened to be sitting on a neighbouring tree saw the Ant's danger, and plucking off a leaf, let it drop into the water before him, and the Ant mounting upon it, was presently wafted safe ashore. Just at that time, a Fowler was spreading his net, and was in the act of ensnaring the Dove, when the

Ant, perceiving his object, bit his heel. The start which the man gave made him drop his net, and the Dove, aroused to a sense of her danger, flew safe away.

One good turn deserves another.

(Fable 296 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN

AN Ass having put on a Lion's skin, roamed about, frightening all the silly animals he met with, and, seeing a Fox, he tried to alarm him also. But Reynard, having heard his voice, said, "Well, to be sure! and I should have been frightened too, if I had not heard you bray."

(Fable 336 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE GOAT AND THE GOATHERD

A GOAT had strayed from the herd, and the Goatherd was trying all he could to bring him back to his companions. When by calling and whistling he could make no impression on him, at last, taking up a stone, he struck the Goat on the horn and broke it. Alarmed at what he had done, he besought the Goat not to tell his master; but he replied, "O most foolish of Goatherds! my horn will tell the story, though I should not utter a word."

Facts speak plainer than words.

(Fable 17 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BOY BATHING

A BOY was bathing in a river, and, getting out of his depth, was on the point of sinking, when he saw a wayfarer coming by, to whom he called out for help with all his might and main. The Man began to read the Boy a lecture for his foolhardiness; but the urchin cried out, "O, save me now, sir! and read me the lecture afterwards."

(Fable 352 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FARMER AND THE DOGS

A FARMER, during a severe winter, being shut up by the snow in his farm-house, and sharply pressed for food, which he was unable to get about to procure, began consuming his own sheep. As the hard weather continued, he next ate up his goats. And at last—for there was no break in the weather—he betook himself to the plough-oxen. Upon this, the Dogs said to one another, "Let us be off; for since the master, as we see, has had no pity on the working-oxen, how is it likely he will spare us?"

(Fable 95 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FARMER AND THE LION

A LION entered one day into a farm-yard, and the Farmer, wishing to catch him, shut the gate. When the Lion found that he could not get out, he began at once to attack the sheep, and then betook himself to the oxen. So the Farmer, afraid for himself, now

opened the gate, and the Lion made off as fast as he could. His wife, who had observed it all, when she saw her husband in great trouble at the loss of his cattle, cried out—"You are rightly served; for what could have made you so mad as to wish to obtain a creature, whom, if you saw at a distance, you would wish further off."

Better scare a thief than snare him.

(Fable 250 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE CHARGER AND THE ASS

A CHARGER adorned with his fine trappings came thundering along the road, exciting the envy of a poor Ass who was trudging along the same way with a heavy load upon his back. "Get out of my road!" said the proud Horse, "or I shall trample you under my feet." The Ass said nothing, but quickly moved to one side to let the Horse pass. Not long afterwards the Charger was engaged in the wars, and being badly wounded in battle was rendered unfit for military service, and sent to work upon a farm. When the Ass saw him dragging with great labour a heavy waggon, he understood how little reason he had had to envy one who, by his overbearing spirit in the time of his prosperity, had lost those friends who might have succoured him in time of need.

(Fable 328 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BRAZIER AND HIS DOG

THERE was a certain Brazier who had a little Dog. While he hammered away at his metal, the Dog slept; but whenever he sat down to his dinner the Dog woke up. "Sluggard cur!" said the

Brazier, throwing him a bone; "you sleep through the noise of the anvil, but wake up at the first clatter of my teeth."

Men are awake enough to their own interests, who turn a deaf ear to their friend's distress.

(Fable 413 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

VENUS AND THE CAT

A CAT having fallen in love with a young man, besought Venus to change her into a girl, in the hope of gaining his affections. The Goddess, taking compassion on her weakness, metamorphosed her into a fair damsel; and the young man, enamoured of her beauty, led her home as his bride. As they were sitting in their chamber, Venus, wishing to know whether in changing her form she had also changed her nature, set down a Mouse before her. The Girl, forgetful of her new condition, started from her seat, and pounced upon the Mouse as if she would have eaten it on the spot; whereupon the Goddess, provoked at her frivolity, straightway turned her into a Cat again.

What is bred in the bone, will never out of the flesh.

(Fable 88 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FISHES

A FISHERMAN was drawing up a net which he had cast into the sea, full of all sorts of fish. The Little Fish escaped through the meshes of the net, and got back into the deep, but the Great Fish were all caught and hauled into the ship.

Our insignificance is often the cause of our safety.

(Fable 26 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

A WOLF, seeing a Goat feeding on the brow of a high precipice where he could not come at her, besought her to come down lower, for fear she would miss her footing at that dizzy height; "and moreover," said he, "the grass is far sweeter and more abundant here below." But the Goat replied: "Excuse me; it is not for my dinner that you invite me, but for your own."

(Fable 270 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS, THE COCK AND THE LION

A N Ass and a Cock lived in a farm-yard together. One day a hungry Lion passing by and seeing the Ass in good condition, resolved to make a meal of him. Now, they say that there is nothing a Lion hates so much as the crowing of a Cock; and at that moment the Cock happening to crow, the Lion straightway made off with all haste from the spot. The Ass, mightily amused to think that a Lion should be frightened at a bird, plucked up courage and galloped after him, delighted with the notion of driving the king of beasts before him. He had, however, gone no great distance, when the Lion turned sharply round upon him, and made an end of him in a trice.

Presumption begins in ignorance and ends in ruin.

(Fable 323 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE RIVERS AND THE SEA

ONCE upon a time the Rivers combined against the Sea, and, going in a body, accused her, saying: "Why is it that when we Rivers pour our waters into you so fresh and sweet, you straightway

render them salt and unpalatable?" The Sea, observing the temper in which they came, merely answered: "If you do not wish to become salt, please keep away from me altogether."

Those who are most benefited are often the first to complain.

(Fable 380 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS CARRYING SALT

A CERTAIN Huckster who kept an Ass, hearing that Salt was to be had cheap at the sea-side, drove down his Ass thither to buy some. Having loaded the beast as much as he could bear, he was driving him home, when, as they were passing a slippery ledge of rock, the Ass fell into the stream below, and the Salt being melted, the Ass was relieved of his burden, and having gained the bank with ease, pursued his journey onward light in body and in spirit. The Huckster soon afterwards set off for the sea-shore for some more Salt, and loaded the Ass, if possible, yet more heavily than before. On their return, as they crossed the stream into which he had formerly fallen, the Ass fell down on purpose, and by the dissolving of the Salt, was again released from his load. The Master, provoked at the loss, and thinking how he might cure him of this trick, on his next journey to the coast freighted the beast with a load of sponges. When they arrived at the same stream as before, the Ass was at his old tricks again, and rolled himself into the water; but the sponges becoming thoroughly wet, he found to his cost, as he proceeded homewards, that instead of lightening his burden, he had more than doubled its weight.

The same measures will not suit all circumstances; and we may play the same trick once too often.

(Fable 322 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BLACKAMOOR

A CERTAIN man bought a Blackamoor, and thinking that the colour of his skin arose from the neglect of his former master, he no sooner brought him home than he procured all manner of scouring apparatus, scrubbing-brushes, soaps, and sand-paper, and set to work with his servants to wash him white again. They drenched and rubbed him for many an hour, but all in vain; his skin remained as black as ever; while the poor wretch all but died from the cold he caught under the operation.

What is bred in the bone will stick to the flesh.

(Fable 13 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SEA-SIDE TRAVELLERS

AS some Travellers were making their way along the sea-shore, they came to a high cliff, and looking out upon the sea saw a Faggot floating at a distance, which they thought at first must be a large Ship; so they waited, expecting to see it come into harbour. As the Faggot drifted nearer to shore, they thought it no longer to be a Ship, but a Boat. But when it was at length thrown on the beach, they saw that it was nothing but a Faggot after all.

Dangers seem greatest at a distance; and coming events are magnified according to the interest or inclination of the beholder.

(Fable 310 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LEOPARD AND THE FOX

A LEOPARD and a Fox had a contest which was the finer creature of the two. The Leopard put forward the beauty of its numberless spots; but the Fox replied—"It is better to have a versatile mind than a variegated body."

(Fable 42 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MONKEY AND THE FISHERMEN

A MONKEY was sitting up in a high tree, when, seeing some Fishermen laying their nets in a river, he watched what they were doing. The Men had no sooner set their nets, and retired a short distance to their dinner, than the Monkey came down from the tree, thinking that he would try his hand at the same sport. But in attempting to lay the nets he got so entangled in them, that being well nigh choked, he was forced to exclaim: "This serves me right; for what business had I, who know nothing of fishing, to meddle with such tackle as this?"

(Fable 362 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE EAGLE AND THE BEETLE

A HARE being pursued by an Eagle, betook himself for refuge to the nest of a Beetle, whom he entreated to save him. The Beetle therefore interceded with the Eagle, begging of him not to kill the poor suppliant, and conjuring him, by mighty Jupiter, not to

slight his intercession and break the laws of hospitality because he was so small an animal. But the Eagle, in wrath, gave the Beetle a flap with his wing, and straightway seized upon the Hare and devoured him. When the Eagle flew away, the Beetle flew after him, to learn where his nest was, and getting into it, he rolled the Eagle's eggs out of it one by one, and broke them. The Eagle, grieved and enraged to think that any one should attempt so audacious a thing, built his nest the next time in a higher place; but there too the Beetle got at it again, and served him in the same manner as before. Upon this the Eagle, being at a loss what to do, flew up to Jupiter, his Lord and King, and placed the third brood of eggs, as a sacred deposit, in his lap, begging him to guard them for him. But the Beetle, having made a little ball of dirt, flew up with it and dropped it in Jupiter's lap; who, rising up on a sudden to shake it off, and forgetting the eggs, threw them down, and they were again broken. Jupiter being informed by the Beetle that he had done this to be revenged upon the Eagle, who had not only wronged him, but had acted impiously towards Jove himself, told the Eagle, when he came to him, that the Beetle was the aggrieved party, and that he complained not without reason. But being unwilling that the race of Eagles should be diminished, he advised the Beetle to come to an accommodation with the Eagle. As the Beetle would not agree to this, Jupiter transferred the Eagle's breeding to another season, when there are no Beetles to be seen.

No one can slight the laws of hospitality with impunity; and there is no station or influence, however powerful, that can protect the oppressor, in the end, from the vengeance of the oppressed.

(Fable 7 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MAN AND HIS TWO WIVES

IN days when a man was allowed more wives than one, a middle-aged bachelor, who could be called neither young nor old, and whose hair was only just beginning to turn grey, must needs fall in love with two women at once, and marry them both. The one was young and blooming, and wished her husband to appear as youthful as herself; the other was somewhat more advanced in age, and was as anxious that her husband should appear a suitable match for her. So, while the young one seized every opportunity of pulling out the good man's grey hairs, the old one was as industrious in plucking out every black hair she could find. For a while the man was highly gratified by their attention and devotion, till he found one morning that, between the one and the other, he had not a hair left.

Those who seek to please everybody end by pleasing nobody.

(Fable 56 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE VINE AND THE GOAT

THERE was a Vine teeming with ripe fruit and tender shoots, when a wanton Goat came up and gnawed the bark, and browsed upon the young leaves. "I will revenge myself on you," said the Vine, "for this insult; for when in a few days you are brought as a victim to the altar, the juice of my grapes shall be the dew of death upon thy forehead."

Retribution though late comes at last.

(Fable 404 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SICK KITE

A KITE, who had been long very ill, said to his mother, "Don't cry, mother; but go and pray to the gods that I may recover from this dreadful disease and pain." "Alas! child," said the mother, "which of the gods can I entreat for one who has robbed all their altars?"

A death-bed repentance is poor amends for the errors of a life-time.

(Fable 208 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASS'S SHADOW

A YOUTH, one hot summer's day, hired an Ass to carry him from Athens to Megara. At mid-day the heat of the sun was so scorching, that he dismounted and would have sat down to repose himself under the shadow of the Ass. But the driver of the Ass disputed the place with him, declaring that he had an equal right to it with the other. "What!" said the Youth, "did I not hire the Ass for the whole journey?" "Yes," said the other, "you hired the Ass, but not the Ass's Shadow." While they were thus wrangling and fighting for the place, the Ass took to his heels and ran away.

In quarrelling over the shadow, we often lose the substance.

(Fable 339 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE DOGS AND THE HIDES

SOME hungry Dogs, seeing some raw Hides which a skinner had left in the bottom of a stream, and not being able to reach them, agreed among themselves to drink up the river to get at the prize.

So they set to work, but they all burst themselves with drinking before ever they came near the Hides.

They who aim at an object by unreasonable means, are apt to ruin themselves in the attempt.

(Fable 218 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION AND THE BULLS

THREE Bulls fed in a field together in the greatest peace and amity. A Lion had long watched them in the hope of making prize of them, but found that there was little chance for him so long as they kept all together. He therefore began secretly to spread evil and slanderous reports of one against the other, till he had fomented a jealousy and distrust amongst them. No sooner did the Lion see that they avoided one another, and fed each by himself apart, than he fell upon them singly, and so made an easy prey of them all.

The quarrels of friends are the opportunities of foes.

(Fable 394 b. Halm; Thomas James translation.)

THE RAVEN AND THE SWAN

A RAVEN envied a Swan the whiteness of her plumage; and, thinking that its beauty was owing to the water in which she lived, he deserted the altars where he used to find his livelihood, and betook himself to the pools and streams. There he plumed and dressed himself and washed his coat, but all to no purpose, for his plumage remained as black as ever, and he himself soon perished for want of his usual food.

Change of scene is not change of nature.

(Fable 206 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SEA

A SHEPHERD moved down his flock to feed near the shore, and beholding the Sea lying in a smooth and breathless calm, he was seized with a strong desire to sail over it. So he sold all his sheep and bought a cargo of Dates, and loaded a vessel, and set sail. He had not gone far when a storm arose; his ship was wrecked, and his Dates and everything lost, and he himself with difficulty escaped to land. Not long after, when the Sea was again calm, and one of his friends came up to him and was admiring its repose, he said, "Have a care, my good fellow, of that smooth surface. It is only looking out for your Dates."

(Fable 370 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SWALLOW IN CHANCERY

A SWALLOW had built her nest under the eaves of a Court of Justice. Before her young ones could fly, a Serpent gliding out of his hole ate them all up. When the poor bird returned to her nest and found it empty, she began a pitiable wailing; but a neighbour suggesting, by way of comfort, that she was not the first bird who had lost her young, "True," she replied, "but it is not only my little ones that I mourn, but that I should have been wronged in that very place where the injured fly for justice."

(Fable 418 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER MAIDS

ATHRIFTY old Widow kept two Servant-maids, whom she used to call up to their work at cock-crow. The Maids disliked exceedingly this early rising, and determined between themselves to wring off the Cock's neck, as he was the cause of all their trouble by waking their mistress so early. They had no sooner done this, than the only lady missing her usual alarm, and afraid of oversleeping herself, continually mistook the time of day, and roused them up at midnight.

Too much cunning overreaches itself.

(Fable 110 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MISER

AMISER, to make sure of his property, sold all that he had and converted it into a great lump of gold, which he hid in a hole in the ground, and went continually to visit and inspect it. This roused the curiosity of one of his workmen, who, suspecting that there was a treasure, when his master's back was turned, went to the spot, and stole it away. When the Miser returned and found the place empty, he wept and tore his hair. But a neighbour who saw him in this extravagant grief, and learned the cause of it, said, "Fret yourself no longer, but take a stone and put it in the same place, and think that it is your lump of gold; for, as you never meant to use it, the one will do you as much good as the other."

The worth of money is not in its possession, but in its use.

(Fable 412 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WILD BOAR AND THE FOX

A WILD Boar was whetting his tusks against a tree, when a Fox coming by asked why he did so; "For," said he, "I see no reason for it; there is neither hunter nor hound in sight, nor any other danger that I can see, at hand." "True," replied the Boar; "but when that danger does arise, I shall have something else to do than to sharpen my weapons."

It is too late to whet the sword when the trumpet sounds to draw it.

(Fable 407 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

A WOLF, once upon a time, resolved to disguise himself, thinking that he should thus gain an easier livelihood. Having, therefore, clothed himself in a sheep's skin, he contrived to get among a flock of Sheep, and feed along with them, so that even the Shepherd was deceived by the imposture. When night came on and the fold was closed, the Wolf was shut up with the Sheep, and the door made fast. But the Shepherd, wanting something for his supper, and going in to fetch out a sheep, mistook the Wolf for one of them, and killed him on the spot.

(Fable 376 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BOASTING TRAVELLER

A MAN who had been travelling in foreign parts, on his return home was always bragging and boasting of the good feats he had accomplished in different places. In Rhodes, for instance, he said he

had taken such an extraordinary leap, that no man could come near him, and he had witnesses there to prove it. "Possibly," said one of his hearers; "but if this be true, just suppose this to be Rhodes, and then try the leap again."

(Fable 203 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE HORSE

AS a Wolf was roaming over a farm, he came to a field of oats, but not being able to eat them, he left them and went his way. Presently meeting with a Horse, he bade him come with him into the field; "For," says he, "I have found some capital oats; and I have not tasted one, but have kept them all for you, for the very sound of your teeth is music to my ear." But the Horse replied: "A pretty fellow! If Wolves were able to eat oats, I suspect you would not have preferred your ears to your appetite."

Little thanks are due to him who only gives away what is of no use to himself.

(Fable 277 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HUNTER AND THE WOODMAN

ABLIND MAN was accustomed to tell the species of any animal that was brought to him, by feeling it over with his hands. and if he knew where his lair was. "Yes," says the Man, "and if you will come with me I will show you the Lion himself." At this the Hunter, turning ghastly pale, and his teeth chattering, said, "Oh, thank you; it was the Lion's track, not himself, that I was hunting."

A coward can be a hero at a distance; it is presence of danger that tests the presence of mind.

(Fable 114 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BLIND MAN AND THE WHELP

A BLIND MAN was accustomed to tell the species of any animal that was brought to him, by feeling it over with his hands. Once they brought to him a Wolf's whelp. He felt it all over, and being in doubt, said, "I know, that I would not trust thee among a flock of sheep."

Evil dispositions are clearly shown.

(Fable 57 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE PORKER AND THE SHEEP

A YOUNG Porker took up his quarters in a fold of Sheep. One day the shepherd laid hold on him, when he squeaked and struggled with all his might and main. The Sheep reproached him for crying out, and said, "The master often lays hold of us, and we do not cry." "Yes," replied he, "but our case is not the same; for he catches you for the sake of your wool, but he lays hold of me for my very life!"

(Fable 115 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MONKEY AND THE CAMEL

A T a great meeting of the Beasts, the Monkey stood up to dance. Having greatly distinguished himself, and being applauded by all present, it roused the envy of the Camel, who came forward and

began to dance also; but he made himself so utterly absurd, that all the Beasts in indignation set upon him with clubs and drove him out of the ring.

It is foolish vanity to try to ape our betters.

(Fable 365 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HORSE AND THE GROOM

A GROOM used to spend whole days in curry-combing and rubbing down his Horse, but at the same time stole his oats, and sold them for his own profit. "Alas!" said the Horse, "if you really wish me to be in good condition, you should groom me less, and feed me more."

Honesty is the best policy.

(Fable 176 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE FAWN AND HIS MOTHER

A YOUNG Fawn once said to his mother, "You are larger than a dog, and swifter, and more used to running, and you have, too, your horns as a defence. Why then, O Mother! are you always in such terrible fright of the hounds?" She smiled and said: "I know full well, my son, that all you say is true. I have the advantages you mention, but yet when I hear only the bark of a single dog I feel ready to faint, and fly away as fast as I can."

No arguments will give courage to a coward.

(Fable 303 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE CAT AND THE MICE

A CAT, grown feeble with age, and no longer able to hunt the Mice as she was wont to do, bethought herself how she might entice them within reach of her paw. Thinking that she might pass herself off for a bag, or for a dead cat at least, she suspended herself by the hind legs from a peg, in the hope that the Mice would no longer be afraid to come near her. An old Mouse, who was wise enough to keep his distance, whispered to a friend, "Many a bag have I seen in my day, but never one with a cat's head." "Hang there, good Madam," said the other, as long as you please, but I would not trust myself within reach of you though you were stuffed with straw."

Old birds are not to be caught with chaff.

(Fable 15 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE NURSE AND THE WOLF

A WOLF, roving about in search of food, passed by a door where a child was crying and its Nurse chiding it. As he stood listening he heard the Nurse say, "Now leave off crying this instant, or I'll throw you out to the Wolf." So thinking that the old woman would be as good as her word, he waited quietly about the house, in expectation of a capital supper. But as it grew dark and the child became quiet, he again heard the Nurse, who was now fondling the child, say, "There's a good dear then; if the naughty Wolf comes for my child, we'll beat him to death. we will." The Wolf, disap-

pointed and mortified, thought it was now high time to be going home, and, hungry as a wolf indeed, muttered as he went along: "This comes of heeding people who say one thing and mean another!"

(Fable 275 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MULE

A MULE that had grown fat and wanton on too good an allowance of corn, was one day jumping and kicking about, and at length, cocking up her tail, exclaimed, "My dam was a Racer, and I am quite as good as ever she was." But being soon knocked up with her galloping and frisking, she remembered all at once that her sire was an Ass.

Every truth has two sides; it is well to look at both, before we commit ourselves to either.

(Fable 157 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERDS

A WOLF looking into a hut and seeing some Shepherds comfortably regaling themselves on a joint of mutton—"A pretty row," said he, "would these men have made if they had caught me at such a supper!"

Men are too apt to condemn in others the very things that they practise themselves.

(Fable 282 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

MERCURY AND THE SCULPTOR

MERCURY having a mind to know in what estimation he was held among men, disguised himself as a traveller, and going into a Sculptor's workshop, began asking the price of the different statues he saw there. Pointing to an image of Jupiter, he asked how much he wanted for that. "A drachma," said the image-maker. Mercury laughed in his sleeve, and asked, "How much for this of Juno?" The man wanted a higher price for that. Mercury's eye now caught his own image. "Now, will this fellow," thought he, "ask me ten times as much for this, for I am the messenger of heaven, and the source of all his gain." So he put the question to him, what he valued that Mercury at. "Well," says the Sculptor, "if you will give me my price for the other two, I will throw you that into the bargain."

They who are over anxious to know how the world values them, will seldom be set down at their own price.

(Fable 137 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ASTRONOMER

AN Astronomer used to walk out every night to gaze upon the stars. It happened one night, that, as he was wandering in the outskirts of the city, with his whole thoughts rapt up in the skies, he fell into a well. On his holloaing and calling out, one who heard his cries ran up to him, and when he had listened to his story, said, "My good man, while you are trying to pry into the mysteries of heaven, you overlook the common objects that are under your feet."

(Fable 72 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE CREAKING WHEELS

AS some Oxen were dragging a waggon along a heavy road, the Wheels set up a tremendous creaking. "Brute!" cried the driver to the waggon; "Why do you groan, when they who are drawing all the weight are silent?"

Those who cry loudest are not always the most hurt.

(Fable 79 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE COUNTRYMAN AND THE SNAKE

A COUNTRYMAN returning home one winter's day, found a Snake by the hedge-side, half dead with cold. Taking compassion on the creature, he laid it in his bosom, and brought it home to his fire-side, to revive it. No sooner had the warmth restored it, than it began to attack the children of the cottage. Upon this the Countryman, whose compassion had saved its life, took up a mattock and laid the Snake dead at his feet.

Those who return evil for good, may expect their neighbour's pity to be worn out at last.

(Fable 97 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE VIPER AND THE FILE

A VIPER entering into a smith's shop began looking about for something to eat. At length, seeing a File, he went up to it and commenced biting at it; but the File bade him leave him alone, saying, "You are likely to get little from me, whose business it is to bite others."

(Fable 146 Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MOLE AND HER MOTHER

S AID a young Mole to her mother, "Mother, I can see." So, in order to try her, her Mother put a lump of frankincense before her, and asked her what it was. "A stone," said the young one. "O, my child!" said the Mother, "not only do you not see, but you cannot even smell."

Brag upon one defect, and betray another.

(Fable 71 b. Halm; Thomas James' translation.)

THE MAN, THE HORSE, THE OX AND THE DOG

A HORSE, Ox, and Dog, driven to great straits by the cold, sought shelter and protection from Man. He received them kindly, lighted a fire, and warmed them. He made the Horse free of his oats, gave the Ox abundance of hay, and fed the Dog with meat from his own table. Grateful for these favours, they determined to repay him to the best of their ability. They divided for this purpose the term of his life between them, and each endowed one portion of it with the qualities which chiefly characterised himself. The Horse chose his earliest years, and endowed them with his own attributes: hence every man is in his youth impetuous, headstrong, and obstinate in maintaining his own opinion. The Ox took under his patronage the next term of life, and therefore man in his middle age is fond of work, devoted to labour, and resolute to amass wealth, and to husband his resources. The end of life was reserved to the Dog, where-

for an old man is often snappish, irritable, hard to please, and selfish, tolerant only of his own household, but averse to strangers, and to all who do not administer to his comfort or to his necessities.

(Fable 173 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WAR-HORSE AND THE MILLER

A WAR-HORSE, feeling the infirmities of age, betook him to a mill instead of going out to battle. But when he was compelled to grind instead of serving in the wars, he bewailed his change of fortune, and called to mind his former state, saying, "Ah! Miller, I had indeed to go a-campaigning before; but I was barbed from counter to tail, and a man went along to groom me; and now, I cannot tell what ailed me to prefer the mill before the battle." "Stop," said the Miller to him, "harping on what used to be, for it is the common lot of mortals to sustain the ups and downs of fortune."

(Fable 174 b. Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE KITES AND THE SWANS

THE Kites of old time had, equally with the Swans, the privilege of song. But having heard the neigh of the horse, they were so enchanted with the sound, that they tried to imitate it; and, in trying to neigh, they forgot how to sing.

The desire for imaginary benefits often involves the loss of present blessings.

(Fable 170 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FOWLER AND THE VIPER

A FOWLER, taking his bird-lime and his twigs, went out to catch birds. Seeing a thrush sitting upon a tree, he wished to take it, and fitting his twigs to a proper length, he watched intently, having his whole thoughts directed towards the sky. While thus looking upwards, he unawares trod upon a Viper asleep just before his feet. The Viper, turning towards him, stung him; and he, falling into a swoon, said to himself, "Poor wretch that I am! While trying to destroy others, I myself have fallen unawares into the snares of death."

(Fable 171 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER

A HORSE Soldier took the utmost pains with his charger. As long as the war lasted, he looked upon him as his fellow-helper in all emergencies, and fed him carefully with hay and corn. When the war was over, he only allowed him chaff to eat, and made him carry heavy loads of wood, and subjected him to much slavish drudgery and ill-treatment. War, however, being again proclaimed, and the trumpet summoning him to his standard, the Soldier put on his charger its military trappings, and mounted, being clad in his heavy coat of mail. The Horse fell down straightway under the weight, no longer equal to the burden, and said to his master, "You must now go to the war on foot, for you have transformed me from a Horse into an Ass; and how can you expect that I can again turn in a moment from an Ass to a Horse?"

(Fable 178 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE CAMEL

WHEN Men first saw the Camel, they were so frightened at his vast size that they fled away. After a time, perceiving the meekness and gentleness of the Camel's temper, they summoned courage enough to approach him. Soon afterwards, observing that he was an animal altogether deficient in spirit, they assumed such boldness as to put a bridle in his mouth, and to set a child to drive him.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

(Fable 180 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE CRAB AND THE FOX

A CRAB, forsaking the sea-shore, chose a neighbouring green meadow as its feeding ground. A Fox came across him, and being very much famished ate him up. Just as he was on the point of being eaten, the Crab said, "I well deserve my fate; for what business had I on the land, when by my nature and habits I am only adapted for the sea?"

Contentment with our lot is an element of happiness.

(Fable 186 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WALNUT-TREE

A WALNUT-TREE standing by the roadside bore an abundant crop of fruit. The passers-by broke its branches with stones and sticks for the sake of the nuts. The Walnut-tree piteously ex-

claimed, "O wretched me! that those whom I cheer with my fruit should repay me with these painful requitals!"

There are many thoughtless people, who return only evil for good.

(Fable 188 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE THIEVES AND THE COCK

SOME Thieves broke into a house, and found nothing but a Cock, whom they stole, and got off as fast as they could. On arriving at home they proceeded to kill the Cock, who thus pleaded for his life: "Pray spare me; I am very serviceable to men. I wake them up in the night to their work." "That is the very reason why we must the more kill you," replied the Thieves; "for when you wake your neighbours, you entirely put an end to our business."

The safeguards of virtue are hateful to the evil-disposed.

(Fable 195 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE THIEF AND THE INNKEEPER

A THIEF hired a room in a tavern, and stayed some days, in the hope of stealing something which should enable him to pay his reckoning. When he had waited some days in vain, he saw the Innkeeper dressed in a new and handsome coat, and sitting before his door. The Thief sat down beside him, and talked with him. As the conversation began to flag, the Thief yawned terribly, and at the same time howled like a Wolf. The Innkeeper said, "Why do you howl so fearfully?" "I will tell you," said the Thief: "but first let me ask you to hold my clothes, for I wish to leave them in

your hands. I know not, sir, when I got this habit of yawning, nor whether these attacks of howling were inflicted on me as a judgment for my crimes, or for any other cause; but this I do know, that when I yawn for the third time, I actually turn into a wolf, and attack men." With this speech he commenced a second fit of yawning, and again howled as a Wolf, as he did at first. The Innkeeper hearing his tale, and believing what he said, became greatly alarmed, and, rising from his seat, attempted to run away. The Thief laid hold of his coat, and entreated him to stop, saying, "Pray wait, sir, and hold my clothes, or I shall tear them to pieces in my fury, when I turn into a Wolf." At the same moment he yawned the third time, and set up a howl like a Wolf. The Innkeeper, frightened lest he should be attacked, left his new coat in his hand, and ran as fast as he could into the inn for safety. The Thief made off with his new coat, and did not return again to the inn.

It is foolish to believe all that we are told.

(Fable 196 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE JACKDAW AND THE DOVES

A JACKDAW seeing some Doves in a cote abundantly provided with food, painted himself white, and joined himself to them, that he might enjoy a share of their good living. The Doves, as long as he was silent, supposing him to be one of themselves, admitted him to their cote; but when, one day forgetting himself, he began to chatter, they, discovering his true character, drove him forth, pecking him with their beaks. Failing to obtain food among the Doves, he

betook himself again to the Jackdaws. They too, not recognizing him on account of his colour, expelled him from living with them. So, desiring two objects, he obtained neither.

(Fable 201 b. Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE CROW AND MERCURY

A CROW caught in a snare prayed to Apollo to release him, making a vow to offer some frankincense at his shrine. Being rescued from his danger, he forgot his promise. Shortly afterwards, on being again caught in a second snare, passing by Apollo he made the same promise to offer frankincense to Mercury. Whereupon Mercury appeared, and said to him, "O thou most base fellow! how can I believe thee, who hast disowned and wronged thy former patron?"

Those who prove ungrateful to former benefactors, cannot hope for further aid.

(Fable 205 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE CROW AND THE SERPENT

A CROW, in great want of food, saw a Serpent asleep in a sunny nook, and flying down, greedily seized him. The Serpent turning about, bit the Crow with a mortal wound; the Crow in the agony of death exclaimed: "O unhappy me! who have found in that which I deemed a happy windfall the source of my destruction."

There are many men who will, like the Serpent, endanger their lives, for the sake of finding treasure.

(Fable 207 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE CROW AND RAVEN

A CROW was very jealous of the Raven, because he was considered a bird of good omen, and always attracted the attention of men, as indicating by his flight the good or evil course of future events. Seeing some travellers approaching, she flew up into a tree, and perching herself on one of the branches, cawed as loudly as she could. The travellers turned towards the sound, and wondered what it boded, when one of them said to his companion, "Let us proceed on our journey, my friend, for it is only the caw of a Crow, and her cry, you know, is no omen."

Those who assume a character which does not belong to them, only make themselves ridiculous.

(Fable 212 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE SWAN AND THE GOOSE

A CERTAIN rich man bought in the market a Goose and a Swan. He fed the one for his table, and kept the other for the sake of its song. When the time came for killing the Goose, the cook went to take him at night, when it was dark, and he was not able to distinguish one bird from the other, and he caught the Swan instead of the Goose. The Swan, threatened with death, burst forth into song, and thus made himself known by his voice, and preserved his life by his melody.

A word in season is most precious.

(Fable 215 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE TWO DOGS

A MAN had two dogs; a Hound, trained to assist him in his sports, and a House-dog, taught to watch the house. When he returned home after a good day's sport, he always gave the House-dog a large share of his spoil. The Hound, feeling much aggrieved at this, reproached his companion, saying, "It is very hard to have all this labour, while you, who do not assist in the chase, luxuriate on the fruits of my exertions." The House-dog replied, "Do not blame me, my friend, but find fault with the master, who has not taught me to labour, but to depend for subsistence on the labour of others."

Children are not to be blamed for the faults of their parents.

(Fable 217 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE DOGS AND THE FOX

SOME Dogs, finding the skin of a lion, began to tear it in pieces with their teeth. A Fox, seeing them, said, "If this lion were alive, you would soon find out that his claws were stronger than your teeth."

It is easy to kick a man that is down.

(Fable 219 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE DOG'S HOUSE

A DOG who spent his winters rolled together and coiled up in as small a space as possible on account of the cold, determined to make himself a house. When the summer returned again he spent his time dozing, stretched at his full length, and thought himself a

very big dog indeed, and considered that it would be neither an easy nor a necessary work to make himself such a house as would accommodate him.

(Fable 222 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE DOG AND THE OYSTER

A DOG, used to eating eggs, saw an Oyster; and opening his mouth to its widest extent, swallowed it down with the utmost relish, supposing it to be an egg. Soon afterwards suffering great pain in his stomach, he said, "I deserve all this torment, for my folly in thinking that everything round must be an egg."

They who act without sufficient thought, will often fall into unsuspected danger.

(Fable 223 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE GNAT AND THE LION

A GNAT came and said to a Lion, "I do not the least fear you, nor are you stronger than I am. For in what does your strength consist? You can scratch with your claws, and bite with your teeth—so can a woman in her quarrels. I repeat that I am altogether more powerful than you; and if you doubt it, let us fight and see who will conquer." The Gnat, having sounded his horn, fastened itself upon the Lion, and stung him on the nostrils and the parts of the face devoid of hair. The Lion, trying to crush him, tore himself with his claws, until he punished himself severely. The Gnat thus prevailed over the Lion, and, buzzing about in a song of triumph, flew away. But shortly afterwards he became entangled in the meshes of a cobweb, and was eaten by a spider. He greatly lamented his fate, saying,

"Woe is me! that I, who can wage war successfully with the hugest beasts, should perish myself from an insignificant spider!"

(Fable 234 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE HARES AND THE FOXES

THE Hares waged war with the Eagles, and called upon the Foxes to help them. The Foxes replied, "We would willingly have helped you, if we had not known who ye were, and with whom ye were fighting."

Count the cost before you commit yourselves.

(Fable 236 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FOX AND THE MONKEY

A FOX and a Monkey were travelling together on the same road. As they journeyed, they passed through a cemetery full of monuments. "All these monuments which you see," said the Monkey, "are erected in honour of my ancestors, who were in their day freed men, and citizens of great renown." The Fox replied, "You have chosen a most appropriate subject for your falsehoods, as I am sure none of your ancestors will be able to contradict you."

A false tale often betrays itself.

(Fable 43 b. Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE MONKEY WHO WOULD BE KING

A MONKEY once danced in an assembly of the Beasts, and so pleased them all by his performance that they elected him their King. A Fox envying him the honour, discovered a piece of meat lying in a trap, and leading the Monkey to the place where it was

said, that she had found a store, but had not used it, but had kept it for him as treasure trove of his kingdom, and counselled him to lay hold of it. The Monkey approached carelessly, and was caught in the trap; and on his accusing the Fox of purposely leading him into the snare, she replied, "O Monkey, how can a creature with such a shallow mind as yours, ever hope to be King over the Beasts?"

(Fable 44 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE MANSLAYER

A MAN committed a murder, and was pursued by the relations of the man whom he murdered. On his reaching the river Nile he saw a lion on its bank, and being fearfully afraid, climbed up a tree. He found a serpent in the upper branches of the tree, and again being greatly alarmed he threw himself into the river, when a crocodile caught him and ate him. Thus the earth, the air, and the water, alike refused shelter to a Murderer.

(Fable 48 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE TWO FROGS AND THE WELL

TWO Frogs dwelt in the same pool. The pool being dried up under the summer's heat, they left it, and set out together for another home. As they went along they chanced to pass a deep well, amply supplied with water, on seeing which one of the Frogs said to the other, "Let us descend and make our abode in this well: it will furnish us with shelter and food." The other replied, with

greater caution, "But suppose the water should fail us, how can we get out again from so great a depth?"

Do nothing without a regard to the consequence.

(Fable 74 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH FROGS

TWO Frogs were neighbours. The one inhabited a deep pond, far removed from public view; the other lived in a gully containing little water, and traversed by a country road. He that lived in the pond warned his friend, and entreated him to change his residence, and to come and live with him, saying that he would enjoy greater safety from danger and more abundant food. The other refused, saying that he felt it so very hard to remove from a place to which he had become accustomed. A few days afterwards a heavy waggon passed through the gully, and crushed him to death under its wheels.

A wilful man will have his way to his own hurt.

(Fable 75 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE LABOURER AND THE SNAKE

A SNAKE, having made his home close to the porch of a cottage, inflicted a severe bite on the Cottager's infant son, of which he died, to the great grief of his parents. The father resolved to kill the Snake, and the next day, on its coming out of its hole for food, took up his axe; but, making too much haste to hit him as he wriggled away, missed his head, and cut off only the end of his tail. After some time the Cottager, afraid lest the Snake should bite

him also, endeavoured to make peace, and placed some bread and salt in his hole. The Snake, slightly hissing, said: "There can henceforth be no peace between us; for whenever I see you I shall remember the loss of my tail, and whenever you see me you will be thinking of the death of your son." No one truly forgets injuries in the presence of him who caused the injury.

(Fable 96 b. Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE PEASANT AND THE APPLE-TREE

A PEASANT had in his garden an Apple-tree, which bore no fruit, but only served as a harbour for the sparrows and grasshoppers. He resolved to cut it down, and, taking his axe in his hand, made a bold stroke at its roots. The grasshoppers and sparrows entreated him not to cut down the tree that sheltered them, but to spare it, and they would sing to him and lighten his labours. He paid no attention to their request, but gave the tree a second and a third blow with his axe: when he reached the hollow of the tree, he found a hive full of honey. Having tasted the honeycomb, he threw down his axe, and, looking on the tree as sacred, took great care of it. Self interest alone moves some men.

(Fable 102 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE PHILOSOPHER, THE ANTS AND MERCURY

A PHILOSOPHER witnessed from the shore the shipwreck of a vessel, of which the crew and passengers were all drowned. He inveighed against the injustice of Providence, which would for the sake of one criminal, perchance sailing in the ship, allow so many

innocent persons to perish. As he was indulging in these reflections, he found himself surrounded by a whole army of Ants, near to whose nest he was standing. One of them climbed up and stung him, and he immediately trampled them all to death with his foot. Mercury presented himself, and striking the Philosopher with his wand, said, "And are you indeed to make yourself a judge of the dealings of Providence, who hast thyself in a similar manner treated these poor Ants?"

(Fable 118 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE OAKS AND JUPITER

THE Oaks presented a complaint to Jupiter, saying, "We bear for no purpose the burden of life, as of all the trees that grow we are the most continually in peril of the axe." Jupiter made answer, "You have only to thank yourselves for the misfortunes to which you are exposed: for if you did not make such excellent pillars and posts, and prove yourselves so serviceable to the carpenters and the farmers, the axe would not so frequently be laid to your roots."

People often blame Providence for misfortunes for which their own natural dispositions are responsible.

(Fable 122 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE OAK AND THE WOODCUTTERS

THE Woodcutters cut down a Mountain Oak, split it in pieces, making wedges of its own branches for dividing the trunk, and for saving their labour. The Oak said with a sigh, "I do not care

about the blows of the axe aimed at my roots, but I do grieve at being torn in pieces by these wedges made from my own branches."

Misfortunes springing from ourselves are the hardest to bear.

(Fable 123 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE OLIVE-TREE AND THE FIG-TREE

THE Olive-tree ridiculed the Fig-tree because, while she was green all the year round, the Fig-tree changed its leaves with the seasons. A shower of snow fell upon them, and, finding the Olive full of foliage, it settled upon its branches, and, breaking them down with its weight, at once despoiled it of its beauty and killed the tree; but finding the Fig-tree denuded of leaves, it fell through to the ground, and did not injure it at all.

(Fable 124 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE DANCING MONKEYS

A PRINCE had some Monkeys trained to dance. Being naturally great mimics of men's actions, they showed themselves most apt pupils; and, when arrayed in their rich clothes and masks, they danced as well as any of the courtiers. The spectacle was often repeated with great applause, till on one occasion a courtier, bent on mischief, took from his pocket a handful of nuts, and threw them upon the stage. The Monkeys, at the sight of the nuts, forgot their dancing, and became (as indeed they were) Monkeys instead of actors, and, pulling off their masks and tearing their robes, they fought with one another for the nuts. The dancing spectacle thus came to an end, amidst the laughter and ridicule of the audience.

(Fable 360 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE RICH MAN AND THE TANNER

A RICH man lived near a Tanner, and not being able to bear the unpleasant smell of the tan-yard, he pressed his neighbour to go away. The Tanner put off his departure from time to time, saying that he would remove soon. But as he still continued to stay, it came to pass, as time went on, the rich man became accustomed to the smell, and feeling no manner of inconvenience, made no further complaints.

(Fable 368 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE SHEPHERD AND THE WOLF

A SHEPHERD once found the whelp of a Wolf, and brought it up, and after a while taught it to steal lambs from the neighbouring flocks. The Wolf having shown himself an apt pupil, said to the Shepherd, "Since you have taught me to steal, you must keep a sharp look-out, or you will lose some of your own flock."

(Fable 375 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP

A SHEPHERD driving his Sheep to a wood, saw an oak of unusual size, full of acorns, and, spreading his cloak under the branches, he climbed up into the tree, and shook down the acorns. The Sheep eating the acorns, inadvertently frayed and tore the cloak. The Shepherd coming down, and seeing what was done, said, "O you

most ungrateful creatures! you provide wool to make garments for all other men, but you destroy the clothes of him who feeds you."

(Fable 378 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WASPS, THE PARTRIDGES AND THE FARMER

THE Wasps and the Partridges, overcome with thirst, came to a Farmer and besought him to give them some water to drink. They promised amply to repay him the favour which they asked. The partridges declared that they would dig around his vines, and make them produce finer grapes. The Wasps said that they would keep guard, and drive off thieves with their stings. The Farmer, interrupting them, said: "I have already two oxen, who, without making any promises, do all these things. It is surely better for me to give the water to them than to you."

(Fable 392 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE PEACOCK AND THE CRANE

A PEACOCK spreading its gorgeous tail mocked a Crane that passed by, ridiculing the ashen hue of its plumage, and saying, "I am robed, like a king, in gold and purple, and all the colours of the rainbow; while you have not a bit of colour on your wings." "True," replied the Crane; "but I soar to the heights of heaven, and lift up my voice to the stars, while you walk below, like a cock, among the birds of the barnyard."

Fine feathers do not make fine birds.

(Fable 397 b. Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FLEA AND THE WRESTLER

A FLEA settled upon the bare foot of a Wrestler, and bit him; on which he called loudly upon Hercules for help. The Flea a second time hopped upon his foot, when he groaned and said, "O Hercules! if you do not help me against a Flea, how can I hope for your assistance against great antagonists?"

(Fable 424 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FLEA AND THE MAN

A MAN, very much annoyed with a Flea, caught him at last, and said, "Who are you who dare to feed on my limbs, and to cost me so much trouble in catching you?" The Flea replied, "O my dear sir, pray spare my life, and destroy me not, for I cannot possibly do you much harm." The Man, laughing, replied, "Now you shall certainly die by mine own hands, for no evil, whether it be small or large, ought to be tolerated."

(Fable 425 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FLEA AND THE OX

A FLEA thus questioned the Ox: "What ails you, that, being so huge and strong, you submit to the wrongs you receive from men, and thus slave for them day by day; while I, being so small a creature, mercilessly feed on their flesh, and drink their blood without stint?" The Ox replied: "I do not wish to be ungrateful; for

I am loved and well cared for by men and they often pat my head and shoulders." "Woe's me!" said the Flea; "this very patting which you like, whenever it happens to me, brings with it my inevitable destruction."

(Fable 426 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE HARES AND THE LIONS

THE Hares harangued the assembly and argued that all should be on an equality. The Lions made this reply: "Your words, O Hares! are good; but they lack both claws and teeth such as we have."

(Fable 241 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE KINGDOM OF THE LION

THE beasts of the field and forest had a Lion as their king. He was neither wrathful, cruel, nor tyrannical, but just and gentle as a king could be. He made during his reign a royal proclamation for a general assembly of all the birds and beasts, and drew up conditions for an universal league, in which the Wolf and the Lamb, the Panther and the Kid, the Tiger and the Stag, the Dog and the Hare, should live together in perfect peace and amity. The Hare said, "Oh, how I have longed to see this day, in which the weak shall take their place with impunity by the side of the strong."

(Fable 242 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE LION AND THE HARE

A LION came across a Hare, who was fast asleep on her form. He was just in the act of seizing her, when a fine young Hart trotted by, and he left the Hare to follow him. The Hare, scared by the noise, awoke, and scudded away. The Lion was not able after a long chase to catch the Hart, and returned to feed upon the Hare. On finding that the Hare also had run off, he said, "I am rightly served, for having let go the food that I had in my hand for the chance of obtaining more."

(Fable 254 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE LION, THE WOLF AND THE FOX

A LION, growing old, lay sick in his cave. All the beasts came to visit their king, except the Fox. The Wolf therefore, thinking that he had a capital opportunity, accused the Fox to the Lion for not paying any respect to him who had the rule over them all, and for not coming to visit him. At that very moment the Fox came in, and heard these last words of the Wolf. The Lion roaring out in a rage against him, he sought an opportunity to defend himself, and said, "And who of all those who have come to you have benefited you so much as I, who have travelled from place to place in every direction, and have sought and learnt from the physicians, the means of healing you?" The Lion commanded him immediately to tell him the cure, when he replied, "You must flay a wolf alive, and wrap his skin yet warm around you." The Wolf was at once taken and flayed; whereon the Fox, turning to him, said, with a smile, "You should have moved your master not to ill, but to good will."

(Fable 255 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE LION, THE MOUSE AND THE FOX

A LION, fatigued by the heat of a summer's day, fell fast asleep in his den. A Mouse ran over his mane and ears, and woke him from his slumbers. He rose up and shook himself in great wrath, and searched every corner of his den to find the Mouse. A Fox seeing him, said: "A fine Lion you are, to be frightened of a Mouse." " 'Tis not the Mouse I fear," said the Lion; "I resent his familiarity and ill-breeding."

Little liberties are great offences.

(Fable 257 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WILD ASS AND THE LION

A WILD Ass and a Lion entered into an alliance that they might capture the beasts of the forest with the greater ease. The Lion agreed to assist the Wild Ass with his strength, while the Wild Ass gave the Lion the benefit of his greater speed. When they had taken as many beasts as their necessities required, the Lion undertook to distribute the prey, and for this purpose divided it into three shares. "I will take the first share," he said, "because I am King: and the second share, as a partner with you in the chase: and the third share, believe me, will be a source of great evil to you, unless you willingly resign it to me, and set off as fast as you can."

Might makes right.

(Fable 258 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE LION, JUPITER AND THE ELEPHANT

THE Lion wearied Jupiter with his frequent complaints. "It is true," he said, "O Jupiter! that I am gigantic in strength, handsome in shape, and powerful in attack. I have jaws well provided with teeth, and feet furnished with claws, and I lord it over all the beasts of the forest; and what a disgrace it is, that being such as I am, I should be frightened by the crowing of a cock." Jupiter replied, "Why do you blame me without a cause? I have given you all the attributes which I possess myself, and your courage never fails you except in this one instance." On this the Lion groaned and lamented very much, and reproached himself with his cowardice, and wished that he might die. As these thoughts passed through his mind, he met an Elephant, and came near to hold a conversation with him. After a time he observed that the Elephant shook his ears very often, and he inquired what was the matter, and why his ears moved with such a tremor every now and then. Just at that moment a gnat settled on the head of the Elephant, and he replied, "Do you see that little buzzing insect? If it enters my ear, my fate is sealed. I should die presently." The Lion said, "Well, since so huge a beast is afraid of a tiny gnat, I will no more complain, nor wish myself dead. I find myself, even as I am, better off than the Elephant, in that very same degree that a cock is greater than a gnat."

(Fable 261 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE LION AND THE BULL

A LION, greatly desirous to capture a Bull, and yet afraid to attack him on account of his great size, resorted to a trick to insure his destruction. He approached him and said, "I have slain a

fine sheep, my friend; and if you will come home and partake of him with me, I shall be delighted to have your company." The Lion said this in the hope that, as the Bull was in the act of reclining to eat, he might attack him to advantage, and make his meal on him. The Bull, however, on his approach to his den, saw the huge spits and giant cauldrons, and no sign whatever of the sheep, and, without saying a word, quietly took his departure. The Lion inquired why he went off so abruptly without a word of salutation to his host, who had not given him any cause of offence. "I have reasons enough," said the Bull. "I see no indication whatever of your having slaughtered a sheep, while I do see, very plainly, every preparation for your dining on a Bull."

(Fable 262 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP-DOGS

THE Wolves thus addressed the Sheep-dogs: "Why should you, who are like us in so many things, not be entirely of one mind with us, and live with us as brothers should? We differ from you in one point only. We live in freedom, but you bow down to, and slave for, men; who, in return for your services, flog you with whips, and put collars on your necks. They make you also guard their sheep, and while they eat the mutton throw only the bones to you. If you will be persuaded by us, you will give us the sheep, and we will enjoy them in common, till we all are surfeited." The Dogs listened favourably to these proposals, and, entering the den of the Wolves, they were set upon and torn to pieces.

(Fable 266 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE WOLF AND THE LION

A WOLF, roaming by the mountain's side, saw his own shadow, as the sun was setting, become greatly extended and magnified, and he said to himself, "Why should I, being of such an immense size, and extending nearly an acre in length, be afraid of the Lion? Ought I not to be acknowledged as King of all the collected beasts?" While he was indulging in these proud thoughts, a Lion fell upon him, and killed him. He exclaimed with a too late repentance, "Poor fool that I was! By thinking too well of myself I have brought about my own destruction."

(Fable 280 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE PROPHET

A WIZARD, sitting in the market-place, told the fortunes of the Passers-by. A person ran up in great haste, and announced to him that the doors of his house had been broken open, and that all his goods were being stolen. He sighed heavily, and hastened away as fast as he could run. A neighbour saw him running, and said, "Oh! you fellow there! you say you can foretell the fortunes of others; how is it you did not foresee your own?"

(Fable 286 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE SPENDTHRIFT AND THE SWALLOW

A YOUNG man, a great spendthrift, had run through all his patrimony, and had but one good cloak left. He happened to see a Swallow, which had appeared before its season, skimming along a pool

and twittering gaily. He supposed that summer had come, and went and sold his cloak. Not many days after, the winter having set in again with renewed frost and cold, he found the unfortunate Swallow lifeless on the ground; and said, "Unhappy bird! what have you done? By thus appearing before the spring-time you have not only killed yourself, but you have wrought my destruction also."

(Fable 304 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE BAT AND THE WEASELS

A BAT falling upon the ground was caught by a Weasel, of whom he earnestly sought his life. The Weasel refused, saying that he was by nature the enemy of all birds. The Bat assured him that he was not a bird, but a mouse, and thus saved his life. Shortly afterwards the Bat again fell on the ground, and was caught by another Weasel, whom he likewise entreated not to eat him. The Weasel said that he had a special hostility to mice. The Bat assured him that he was not a mouse, but a bat; and thus a second time escaped.

It is wise to turn circumstances to good account.

(Fable 307 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE TRAVELLER AND FORTUNE

A TRAVELLER, wearied with a long journey, lay down overcome with fatigue on the very brink of a deep well. Being within an inch of falling into the water, Dame Fortune, it is said, appeared to him, and waking him from his slumber, thus addressed him: "Good Sir, pray wake up: for had you fallen into the well, the blame

will be thrown on me, and I shall get an ill name among mortals; for I find that men are sure to impute their calamities to me, however much by their own folly they have really brought them on themselves."

Every one is more or less master of his own fate.

(Fable 316 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE ASS AND HIS PURCHASER

A MAN wished to purchase an Ass, and agreed with its owner that he should try him before he bought him. He took the Ass home, and put him in the straw-yard with his other Asses, upon which he left all the others, and joined himself at once to the most idle and the greatest eater of them all. The man put a halter on him, and led him back to his owner; and on his inquiring how, in so short a time, he could have made a trial of him, "I do not need," he answered, "a trial; I know that he will be just such another as the one whom of all the rest he chose for his companion."

A man is known by the company he keeps.

(Fable 320 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE ASS AND THE FROGS

A N Ass, carrying a load of wood, passed through a pond. As he was crossing through the water he lost his footing, and stumbled and fell, and not being able to rise on account of his load, he groaned heavily. Some Frogs frequenting the pool heard his lamentation,

and said, "What would you do if you had to live here always as we do, when you make such a fuss about a mere fall into the water?"

Men often bear little grievances with less courage than they do large misfortunes.

(Fable 327 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE ASS AND THE WOLF

AN Ass, feeding in a meadow, saw a Wolf, approaching to seize him, and immediately pretended to be lame. The Wolf, coming up, inquired the cause of his lameness. The Ass said, that passing through a hedge he trod with his foot upon a sharp thorn, and requested the Wolf to pull it out, lest when he supped on him it should injure his throat. The Wolf consenting, and lifting up his foot, and giving his whole mind to the discovery of the thorn, the Ass with his heels kicked his teeth into his mouth, and galloped away. The Wolf, being thus fearfully mauled, said, "I am rightly served, for why did I attempt the art of healing, when my father only taught me the trade of a butcher?"

(Fable 334 b. Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE HEN AND THE SWALLOW

A HEN finding the eggs of a viper, and carefully keeping them warm, nourished them into life. A Swallow observing what she had done, said, "You silly creature! why have you hatched these vipers, which, when they shall have grown, will inflict injury on all, beginning with yourself?"

(Fable 342 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE SWOLLEN FOX

A FOX, very much famished, seeing some bread and meat left by shepherds in the hollow of an oak, crept into the hole and made a hearty meal. When he finished, he was so full that he was not able to get out, and began to groan and lament very sadly. Another Fox passing by, heard his cries, and coming up, inquired the cause of his complaining. On learning what had happened, he said to him, "Ah, you will have to remain there, my friend, until you become such as you were when you crept in, and then you will easily get out."

(Fable 31 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FISHERMEN

SOME Fishermen were out trawling their nets. Perceiving them to be very heavy, they danced about for joy, and supposed that they had taken a large draught of fish. When they had dragged the nets to the shore they found but few fish, and that the nets were full of sand and stones; and they were beyond measure cast down—not so much at the disappointment which had befallen them, as because they had formed such very different expectations. One of their company, an old man, said, "Let us cease lamenting, my mates, for, as it seems to me, sorrow is always the twin sister of joy; and it was only to be looked for that we, who just now were over-rejoiced, should next have something to make us sad."

Storms often gather from a clear sky.

(Fable 23 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE FOX AND THE BRAMBLE

A FOX, mounting a hedge, when he was about to fall caught hold of a bramble. Having pricked and grievously torn the soles of his feet, he accused the Bramble, because, when he had fled to her for assistance, she had used him worse than the hedge itself. The Bramble, interrupting him, said, "But you really must have been out of your senses to fasten yourself on me, who am myself always accustomed to fasten upon others."

It is folly to expect aid and comfort from those who have habitually wrought us mischief.

(Fable 32 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE GAME-CKOCKS AND THE PARTRIDGE

A MAN had two Game-cocks in his poultry-yard. One day by chance he fell in with a tame Partridge for sale. He purchased it, and brought it home that it might be reared with his Game-cocks. On its being put into the poultry-yard they struck at it, and followed it about, so that the Partridge was grievously troubled in mind, and supposed that he was thus evilly treated because he was a stranger. Not long afterwards he saw the Cocks fighting together, and not separating before one had well beaten the other. He then said to himself, "I shall no longer distress myself at being struck at by these Game-cocks, when I see that they cannot even refrain from quarrelling with each other."

(Fable 22 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

THE OWL AND THE BIRDS

AN Owl, in her wisdom, counselled the Birds, when the acorn first began to sprout, to pull it up by all means out of the ground, and not to allow it to grow, because it would produce the mistletoe, from which an irremediable poison, the bird-lime, would be extracted, by which they would be captured. The Owl next advised them to pluck up the seed of the flax, which men had sown, as it was a plant which boded no good to them for nets would be made from it. And, lastly, the Owl, seeing an archer approach, predicted that this man, being on foot, would contrive darts armed with feathers, which should fly faster than the wings of the Birds themselves. The Birds gave no credence to these warning words, but considered the Owl to be beside herself, and said that she was mad. But afterwards, finding her words were true, they wondered at her knowledge, and deemed her to be the wisest of birds. Hence it is that when she appears they resort to her as knowing all things; while she no longer gives them advice, but in solitude laments their past folly.

(Fable 105 Halm; Townsend's translation.)

PART II

BABRIUS

PART II—BABRIUS

THE FROG AND THE OX



AN Ox, grazing in a swampy meadow, chanced to set his foot among a parcel of young frogs, and crushed nearly the whole brood to death. One that escaped ran off to his mother with the dreadful news; "And, O mother!" said he, "it was a beast—such a big fourfooted beast!—that did it." "Big?" quoth the old Frog, "how big? was it as big"—and she puffed herself out to a great degree—"as big as this?" "Oh!" said the little one, "a great deal bigger than that." "Well, was it so big?" and she swelled herself out yet more. "Indeed, mother, but it was; and if you were to burst yourself, you would never reach half its size." Provoked at such a disparagement of her powers, the old Frog made one more trial, and burst herself indeed.

So men are ruined by attempting a greatness to which they have no claim.

(Babrius, Fable 28; Thomas James' translation.)

THE ARAB AND THE CAMEL

AN Arab having loaded his Camel, asked him whether he preferred to go up hill or down hill. "Pray, Master," said the Camel dryly, "is the straight way across the plain shut up?"

(Babrius, Fable 8; Thomas James' translation.)

So each gave to the other the contents of his own basket. And thus they continued daily to exchange provisions, till one who had observed them said: "Now, by this invariable interchange, will they destroy the zest of their meal; and each will soon wish to return to his own store again."

(Babrius, Fable 61; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BEEVES AND THE BUTCHERS

THE Beeves, once on a time, determined to make an end of the Butchers, whose whole art, they said, was conceived for their destruction. So they assembled together, and had already whetted their horns for the contest, when a very old Ox, who had long worked at the plough, thus addressed them:—"Have a care, my friends, what you do. These men, at least, kill us with decency and skill, but if we fall into the hands of botchers instead of butchers, we shall suffer a double death; for be well assured, men will not go without beef, even though they were without butchers."

Better to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of.

(Babrius, Fable 21; Thomas James' translation.)

THE DOG AND HIS MASTER

A CERTAIN Man was setting out on a journey, when, seeing his Dog standing at the door, he cried out to him, "What are you gaping about? Get ready to come with me." The Dog, wagging his tail, said, "I am all right, Master; it is you who have to pack up."

(Babrius, Fable 110; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES

THERE was a brood of young Larks in a field of corn, which was just ripe, and the mother, looking every day for the reapers, left word, whenever she went out in search of food, that her young ones should report to her all the news they heard. One day, while she was absent the master came to look at the state of the crop. "It is full time," said he, "to call in all my neighbours and get my corn reaped." When the old Lark came home, the young ones told their mother what they had heard, and begged her to remove them forthwith. "Time enough," said she; "if he trusts to his neighbours, he will have to wait awhile yet for his harvest." Next day, however, the owner came again, and finding the sun still hotter and the corn more ripe, and nothing done, "There is not a moment to be lost," said he; "we cannot depend upon our neighbours: we must call in our relations;" and, turning to his son, "Go call your uncles and cousins, and see that they begin to-morrow." In still greater fear, the young ones repeated to their mother the farmer's words. "If that be all," says she, "do not be frightened, for the relations have got harvest work of their own; but take particular notice what you hear the next time, and be sure you let me know." She went abroad the next day, and the owner coming as before, and finding the grain falling to the ground from over-ripeness, and still no one at work, called to his son. "We must wait for our neighbours and friends no longer; do you go and hire some reapers to-night, and we will set to work ourselves to-morrow." When the young ones told their mother this—"Then," said she, "it is time to be off, indeed; for when a man takes

up his business himself, instead of leaving it to others, you may be sure that he means to set to work in earnest."

(Babrius, Fable 88; Thomas James' translation.)

THE LION AND THE EAGLE

AN Eagle stayed his flight, and entreated a Lion to make an alliance with him to their mutual advantage. The Lion replied, "I have no objection, but you must excuse me for requiring you to find surety for your good faith; for how can I trust any one as a friend, who is able to fly away from his bargain whenever he pleases?"

Try before you trust.

(Babrius, Fable 100; Townsend's translation.)

JUPITER AND THE MONKEY

JUPITER issued a proclamation to all the beasts of the forest, and promised a royal reward to the one whose offspring should be deemed the handsomest. The Monkey came with the rest, and presented, with all a mother's tenderness, a flat-nosed, hairless, ill-featured young Monkey as a candidate for the promised reward. A general laugh saluted her on the presentation of her son. She resolutely said, "I know not whether Jupiter will allot the prize to my son; but this I do know, that he is at least in the eyes of me, his mother, the dearest, handsomest, and most beautiful of all."

(Babrius, Fable 56; Townsend's translation.)

CLASSICAL FABLES

THE PLAYFUL ASS

The Ass went up to the roof of a building, and frisking about
was doing a fine thing. The owner went up after him, and
brought him down, beating him severely with a thick wooden
stick. He said, "Why, I saw the Monkey do this very thing
and you all laughed heartily, as if it afforded you very
great amusement."

Those who do not know their right place must be taught it.

Babrius, Fable 125; Townsend's translation.

THE BIRD-CATCHER, THE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCK

A BIRD-CATCHER was about to sit down to a dinner of herbs,
when a friend unexpectedly came in. The bird-trap was quite
empty, as he had caught nothing. He proceeded to kill a pied Par-
tridge, which he had tamed for a decoy. He entreated thus earnestly
for his life: "What would you do without me when next you spread
your nets? Who would chirp you to sleep, or call for you the covey
of answering birds?" The Bird-catcher spared his life, and deter-
mined to pick out a fine young Cock just attaining to his comb. He
thus expostulated in piteous tones from his perch: "If you kill me,
who will announce to you the appearance of the dawn? Who will
wake you to your daily tasks? or tell you when it is time to visit the
bird-trap in the morning?" He replied, "What you say is true.
You are a capital bird at telling the time of day. But I and the friend
who has come in must have our dinners."

Necessity knows no law.

(Babrius, Fable 124; Townsend's translation.)

THE MOUSE AND THE BULL

A BULL was bitten by a Mouse, and, pained by the wound, tried to capture him. The Mouse first reached his hole in safety, and the Bull dug into the walls with his horns, until wearied, crouching down, he slept by the hole. The Mouse peeping out, crept furtively up his flank, and, again biting him, retreated to his hole. The Bull rising up, and not knowing what to do, was sadly perplexed. The Mouse murmured forth, "The great do not always prevail. There are times when the small and lowly are the strongest to do mischief."

(Babrius, Fable 112; Townsend's translation.)

PART III. A.

PHÆDRUS

PART III. A.—PHÆDRUS

THE FROGS ASKING FOR A KING



IN the days of old, when the Frogs were all at liberty in the lakes, and had grown quite weary of following every one his own devices, they assembled one day together, and with no little clamour petitioned Jupiter to let them have a King to keep them in better order, and make them lead honester lives. Jupiter knowing the vanity of their hearts, smiled at their request, and threw down a Log into the lake, which by the splash and commotion it made, sent the whole commonwealth into the greatest terror and amazement. They rushed under the water and into the mud, and dared not come within ten leaps' length of the spot where it lay. At length one Frog bolder than the rest ventured to pop his head above the water, and take a survey of their new King at a respectful distance. Presently, when they perceived the Log to lie stock-still, others began to swim up to it and around it; till by degrees, growing bolder and bolder, they at last leaped upon it, and treated it with the greatest contempt. Dissatisfied with so tame a ruler, they forthwith petitioned Jupiter a second time for another and more active King. Upon which he sent them a Stork, who no sooner arrived among them than he began laying hold of them and devouring them one by one as fast as he could, and it was in vain that they endeavoured to escape him. Then they sent Mercury with a private message to Jupiter, be-

seeching him that he would take pity on them once more; but Jupiter replied, that they were only suffering the punishment due to their folly, and that another time they would learn to let well alone, and not be dissatisfied with their natural condition.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 2; Thomas James' translation.)

THE VAIN JACKDAW

A JACKDAW, as vain and conceited as Jackdaw could be, picked up the feathers which some Peacocks had shed, stuck them amongst his own, and despising his old companions, introduced himself with the greatest assurance into a flock of those beautiful birds. They, instantly detecting the intruder, stripped him of his borrowed plumes, and falling upon him with their beaks, sent him about his business. The unlucky Jackdaw, sorely punished and deeply sorrowing, betook himself to his former companions, and would have flocked with them again as if nothing had happened. But they, recollecting what airs he had given himself, drummed him out of their society, while one of those whom he had so lately despised, read him this lecture:—"Had you been contented with what nature made you:—you would have escaped the chastisement of your betters and also the contempt of your equals."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 3; Thomas James' translation.)

THE COW, THE GOAT, THE SHEEP AND THE LION

THE Cow, the Goat and the unresentful Sheep once formed a partnership with the Lion in his native jungle. One day, when they had run down a large Stag and divided it into four parts, the

Lion spoke as follows:

"I naturally take the first part because I am named the Lion; you will give me the second part as a tribute to my courage; then, since I am the strongest, the third part comes to me anyway; and woe betide any one of you who meddles with the fourth!" And thus he unblushingly appropriated the entire Stag for himself.

Do not expect justice where might is right.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 5.)

THE FOX AND THE MASK

A FOX had stolen into the house of an actor, and in rummaging among his various properties, laid hold of a highly-finished Mask. "A fine-looking head, indeed!" cried he; "what a pity it is that it wants brains!"

A fair outside is but a poor substitute for inward worth.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 7; Thomas James' translation.)

THE HARE AND THE SPARROW

A HARE had been seized by an Eagle, and was squeaking pitifully, when a passing Sparrow asked with a sneer, "What has become of your famous speed, friend Hare? what was the matter with your legs?" These words were hardly out of the Sparrow's mouth, when a Hawk snatched him up unaware and quickly silenced his vain outcry. The dying Hare found comfort in this sight. "Ah, friend Sparrow," she said, "you who just now thought that you could safely laugh at my misfortune have fallen victim to the same cruel fate!"

It is foolish to advise others if you cannot take care of yourself.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 9.)

THE MONKEY HOLDING COURT

THE Wolf once accused the Fox of having robbed him. The Fox denied that she had stolen anything. The two were brought before Judge Monkey to decide between them. When each in turn had stated his side of the case, the Monkey rendered judgment as follows:

"It is evident, Mr. Wolf, that you have not lost what you ask back! But it is equally evident, Mrs. Fox, that you did take what you so glibly deny!"

Whoever once earns a reputation for lying will not be believed even when he tells the truth.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 10.)

THE STAG AT THE POOL

A STAG one summer's day came to a pool to quench his thirst, and as he stood drinking he saw his form reflected in the water. "What beauty and strength," said he, "are in these horns of mine; but how unseemly are these weak and slender feet!" While he was thus criticising, after his own fancies, the form which Nature had given him, the huntsmen and hounds drew that way. The feet, with which he had found so much fault, soon carried him out of the reach of his pursuers; but the horns, of which he was so vain, becoming entangled in a thicket, held him till the hunters again came up to him, and proved the cause of his death.

Look to use before ornament.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 12; Thomas James' translation.)

THE COBBLER TURNED DOCTOR

A CLUMSY and unsuccessful Cobbler, rendered desperate by poverty, went to a strange town and began to practise medicine. He sold a drug which he falsely claimed was an antidote for all poisons, and obtained a great reputation, thanks to his high-sounding advertisements. It happened that the Mayor of the town, finding himself indisposed, sent for this new Doctor; but deciding first to put him to a test, he called for a cup and while pouring in water pretended that he was mixing poison with the Cobbler's antidote, and proposed that they should drink it together on a wager. Hereupon the Cobbler under fear of death confessed that he had no skill in the art of medicine, and owed his fame only to the credulity of the crowd. The Mayor forthwith called a public meeting, and thus addressed the citizens:

"Consider the folly of which you have been guilty! You have not hesitated to entrust your lives to a man whom no one would trust even to make the shoes for their feet."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 14.*)

THE ASS AND THE OLD SHEPHERD

A SHEPHERD watched his Ass feeding in a meadow. Being alarmed on a sudden by the cries of the enemy, he appealed to the Ass to fly with him, lest they should both be captured. He lazily replied, "Why should I, pray? Do you think it likely the conquerer will place on me two sets of panniers?" "No," rejoined the

Shepherd. "Then," said the Ass, "as long as I carry the panniers, what matters it to me whom I serve?"

In a change of government the poor change nothing beyond the name of their master.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 15; Thomas James' translation.)

THE STAG AND THE SHEEP

THE Stag once asked the Sheep to lend him a measure of wheat, saying that the Wolf would guarantee payment. The Sheep, suspecting trickery, replied: "The Wolf is a lawless beast, forever plundering and running off; while you yourself are so swift that one moment you are here and the next moment out of sight. How should I find you when the day of payment comes?"

The word of two rogues is no better than the word of one.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 16.)

THE PUPPIES AND THEIR MOTHER

THE proud Mother of a family of new-born Puppies asked a sister Dog to let her occupy her kennel for a few days. The other, good-naturedly, moved out and gave her possession. After some days had passed, and she wanted her kennel back, the other pleaded pitifully for a further extension of time, until the Puppies should be strong enough to walk out by themselves. When this time also had passed, and her friend came once more to demand back the kennel, she faced her defiantly in the doorway: "If you think you are a match

for me and my stalwart sons," she said, "come ahead and put us out!"

A smooth tongue often covers a false heart.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 19.*)

THE OLD LION

A LION worn out with years lay stretched upon the ground, utterly helpless, and drawing his last breath. A Boar came up, and to satisfy an ancient grudge, drove at him with his tusks. Next a Bull, determined to be revenged on an old enemy, gored him with his horns. Upon this an Ass, seeing that the old Lion could thus be treated with impunity, thought that he would show his spite also, and came and threw his heels in the Lion's face. Whereupon the dying beast exclaimed: "The insults of the powerful were bad enough, but those I could have managed to bear; but to be spurned by so base a creature as thou—the disgrace of nature, is to die a double death."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 21; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE FAITHFUL DOG

A THIEF in the night threw a piece of bread to a Dog, hoping to make friends with him by this offer of food. "Listen, stranger," said the Dog, "if you think you can silence my tongue and keep me from barking to warn my Master, you are much mistaken. This sudden friendliness on your part warns me to keep my eyes wide open so that you shall not be the richer through any fault of mine."

Sudden generosity may please the foolish, but it sets its traps in vain for the wary.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 23.*)

THE DOG AND THE CROCODILE

THE story goes that when Dogs drink from the River Nile, they keep on running while they drink, so that the Crocodiles cannot catch them. Accordingly, when a certain Dog began to drink as he ran, a Crocodile said to him:

"Don't be afraid,—come on in, and lap the water up at your leisure."

"Nothing I should like better," replied the Dog, "if I did not know just how hungrily you are eyeing me."

Those who give bad advice to cautious men waste their time and make themselves ridiculous.

(Phædrus, Fables, Book I, No. 25.)

THE FROGS AND THE FIGHTING BULLS

A FROG, sitting at the edge of a swamp, was watching a battle between two Bulls in an adjoining field. "Alas! what deadly danger threatens us," he said. Another Frog, overhearing him, asked what he meant, when the Bulls were merely fighting to decide which should lead the herd, and the cattle passed their lives quite apart from the home of the Frogs. "It is true," rejoined the first Frog, "that they are a different race and live apart from us. But whichever Bull is beaten and driven from his leadership in the woods will come to find some secret hiding place; and I fear that many of us will be trampled to pieces under his hard hoofs. That is why I say that their battle means death and destruction to us."

When the mighty quarrel, the humble pay the cost.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 30.)

THE KITE AND THE PIGEONS

SOME Pigeons had long lived in fear of a Kite, but by being always on the alert, and keeping near their dove-cote, they had contrived hitherto to escape the attacks of the enemy. Finding his sallies unsuccessful, the Kite betook himself to craft: "Why," said he, "do you prefer this life of continual anxiety, when, if you would only make me your king, I would secure you from every attack that could be made upon you?" The Pigeons, trusting to his professions, called him to the throne; but no sooner was he established there than he exercised his prerogative by devouring a pigeon a-day. Whereupon one that yet awaited his turn, said no more than "It serves us right."

They who voluntarily put power into the hand of a tyrant or an enemy, must not wonder if it be at last turned against themselves.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. I, No. 31; Thomas James' translation.*)

THE EAGLE, THE CAT AND THE WILD SOW

AN Eagle had made her nest at the top of a tall oak. A Cat, having found a convenient hole in the middle of the trunk, placed her kittens there; and a Wild Sow had found shelter for her young in another hollow at its foot. Before long the Cat decided to destroy the peace of this community by cruel trickery. As part of her plan, she climbed up to the nest of the Eagle and said:

"Destruction is threatening you, and probably me too, for the Wild Sow, whom you see daily rooting in the ground, is planning to uproot and overthrow this oak so that she may find an easy prey in your young ones and mine."

Having thus spread terror and confusion in the Eagle's nest, she crept down to the lair of the bristly Wild Sow.

"Your little Porkers," said she, "are in great danger. For the very next time that you take your little family out to feed the Eagle is prepared to swoop down and carry them off."

Leaving consternation behind her in the Sow's lair, the crafty Cat hid herself in the safe recesses of her own hole, stealing out only at night time, with noiseless tread, to find food for herself and Kittens. But all day long she pretended to be in mortal fear, and kept a crafty look-out from her lofty hollow. Meanwhile, the Eagle, fearing destruction, fasted in the top branches; while the Wild Sow, dreading invasion, dared not put her snout out of her lair. Before long the two mothers and their families perished from hunger, and afforded an ample feast for the Cat and her Kittens.

This stupid credulity bears witness to the wide-spread havoc that can be wrought by a man with a false tongue.

(Phædrus, Fables. Vol. II, No. 4.)

THE MULES AND THE ROBBERS

TWO Mules, well laden with packs, were trudging along. One carried panniers filled with money, the other sacks weighted with grain. The Mule carrying the treasure walked with head erect, as if conscious of the value of his burden, and tossed up and down the clear toned bells fastened to his neck. His companion followed with quiet and easy step. All on a sudden Robbers rushed from their hiding-places upon them, and in the scuffle with their owners, wounded with a sword the Mule carrying the treasure, which they

greedily seized upon, while they took no notice of the grain. The Mule which had been robbed and wounded, bewailed his misfortunes. The other replied, "I am indeed glad that I was thought so little of, for I have lost nothing, nor am I hurt with any wound."

Better an humble lot with security than great wealth beset with dangers.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. II, No. 7; Townsend's translation.)

THE STAG IN THE OX-STALL

A HUNTED Stag, driven out of covert and distracted by fear, made for the first farm-house he saw, and hid himself in an Ox-stall which happened to be open. As he was trying to conceal himself under the straw, "What can you mean," said an Ox, "by running into such certain destruction as to trust yourself to the haunts of man?" "Only do you not betray me," said the Stag, "and I shall be off again on the first opportunity." Evening came on; the herdsman foddered the cattle, but observed nothing. The other farm-servants came in and out. The Stag was still safe. Presently the bailiff passed through; all seemed right. The Stag now feeling himself quite secure began to thank the Oxen for their hospitality. "Wait awhile," said one of them, "we indeed wish you well, but there is yet another person, one with a hundred eyes; if he should happen to come this way I fear your life will be still in jeopardy." While he was speaking, the Master, having finished his supper, came round to see that all was safe for the night, for he thought that his cattle had not of late looked as well as they ought. Going up to the rack, "Why so little fodder here?" says he; "Why is there not more straw?" And "How long, I wonder, would it take to sweep down

these cobwebs!" Prying and observing, here and there and everywhere, the Stag's antlers, jutting from out the straw, caught his eye, and calling in his servants he instantly made prize of him.

No eye like the Master's eye.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. II, No. 8; Thomas James' translation.)

THE OLD HOUND

A HOUND, who had been an excellent one in his time, and had done good service to his master in the field, at length became worn out with the weight of years and trouble. One day, when hunting the wild Boar, he seized the creature by the ear, but his teeth giving way, he was forced to let go his hold, and the Boar escaped. Upon this the huntsman, coming up, severely rated him. But the feeble Dog replied, "Spare your old servant! It was the power not the will that failed me. Remember rather what I was, than abuse me for what I am."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. 5, No. 10; Thomas James' translation.)

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE WINE-JAR

A N Old Woman saw an empty Wine-jar lying on the ground. Though not a drop of the noble Falernian, with which it had been filled, remained, it still yielded a grateful fragrance to the passers-by. The Old Woman, applying her nose as close as she could and snuffing with all her might and main, exclaimed, "Sweet creature! how charming must your contents once have been, when the very dregs are so delicious!"

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 1; Thomas James' translation.)

THE PANTHER AND THE SHEPHERDS

A PANTHER, by some mischance, fell into a pit. The Shepherds discovered him, and threw sticks at him, and pelted him with stones, while some of them, moved with compassion towards one about to die even though no one should hurt him, threw in some food to prolong his life. At night they returned home, not dreaming of any danger, but supposing that on the morrow they should find him dead. The Panther, however, when he had recruited his feeble strength, freed himself with a sudden bound from the pit, and hastened home with rapid steps to his den. After a few days he came forth and slaughtered the cattle, and, killing the Shepherds who had attacked him, raged with angry fury. Then they who had spared his life, fearing for their safety, surrendered to him their flocks, and begged only for their lives; to whom the Panther made this reply: "I remember alike those who sought my life with stones, and those who gave me food—lay aside, therefore, your fears. I return as an enemy only to those who injured me."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 2; Townsend's translation.)

THE MONKEY'S FACE

ONE day a Man was passing by a butcher's shop, when he happened to see the body of a Monkey hanging there among the other kinds of meat and game. Out of curiosity, he stopped and asked the butcher if he could tell him what Monkey tasted like. The butcher replied jokingly, "The best way to judge of any one's tastes is from the expression of the face!"

This answer is more clever than it is true. For many a handsome face cloaks evil dispositions, and homely features often go with a kindly nature.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 4.*)

ÆSOP AND THE YOUNG ROWDY

A CERTAIN Young Rowdy once shied a stone and struck Æsop. "Good shot!" said the old man, and gave the boy a penny, adding, "That's all I've got, on my word. But I'll show you a way to get more. Do you see that man coming there? he's rich and important! if you can hit him as you did me you will get the reward you deserve." The Young Rowdy thought this good advice and followed it, but was disappointed at the result of his shameless impudence, for he found himself arrested and properly punished by the court.

A little success has led many a man to his ruin.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 5.*)

THE FLY AND THE DRAUGHT-MULE

A FLY sat on the axle-tree of a chariot, and addressing the Draught-mule said, "How slow you are! Why do you not go faster? See if I do not prick your neck with my sting." The Draught-mule replied, "I do not heed your threats; I only care for him who sits above you, and who quickens my pace with his whip, or holds me back with the reins. Away, therefore, with your insolence, for I know well when to go fast, and when to go slow."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 6; Townsend's translation.*)

THE HOUSE-DOG AND THE WOLF

A LEAN hungry Wolf chanced one moonshiny night to fall in with a plump well-fed House-Dog. After the first compliments were passed between them, "How is it, my friend," said the Wolf, "that you look so sleek? How well your food agrees with you! And here am I striving for my living night and day, and can hardly save myself from starving." "Well," says the Dog, "if you would fare like me, you have only to do as I do." "Indeed!" says he, "and what is that?" "Why," replies the Dog, "just to guard the master's house and keep off the thieves at night." "With all my heart; for at present I have but a sorry time of it. This woodland life, with its frosts and rains, is sharp work for me. To have a warm roof over my head and a bellyful of victuals always at hand will, methinks, be no bad exchange." "True," says the Dog; "therefore you have nothing to do but to follow me." Now as they were jogging on together, the Wolf spied a mark in the Dog's neck, and having a strange curiosity, could not forbear asking what it meant. "Pooh! nothing at all," says the Dog. "Nay, but pray"—says the Wolf. "Oh! a mere trifle, perhaps the collar to which my chain is fastened—" "Chain!" cries the Wolf in surprise; "you don't mean to say that you cannot rove when and where you please?" "Why, not exactly perhaps; you see I am looked upon as rather fierce, so they sometimes tie me up in the day-time, but I assure you I have perfect liberty at night, and the master feeds me off his own plate, and the servants give me their tit-bits, and I am such a favourite, and—but what is the matter? where are you going?" "Oh, good night to you," says the Wolf;

"you are welcome to your dainties; but for me, a dry crust with liberty against a king's luxury with a chain."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 7; Thomas James' translation.)

THE CRIPPLE AND THE BULLY

A CERTAIN Bully once tried to pick a quarrel with a Cripple, and in addition to bad language and insulting remarks, jeered at him for his bodily affliction. The Cripple replied:

"The loss of a limb is only a reason why I should strive the harder to do my part of the world's work. But why, poor fool, do you jeer at my misfortune? There is no shame in the accidents of chance, but only in the consequence of our own misdeeds."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 11.)

THE BEES, THE DRONES AND THE WASP

SOME Bees had built their comb in the hollow trunk of an oak. The Drones asserted that it was their doing, and belonged to them. The cause was brought into court before Judge Wasp. Knowing something of the parties, he thus addressed them:—"The plaintiffs and defendants are so much alike in shape and colour as to render the ownership a doubtful matter, and the case has very properly been brought before me. The ends of justice, and the object of the court, will best be furthered by the plan which I propose. Let each party take a hive to itself, and build up a new comb, that from the shape of the cells and the taste of the honey, the lawful proprietors of the property in dispute may appear." The Bees readily assented to the Wasp's plan. The Drones declined it. Where-

upon the Wasp gave judgment:—"It is clear now who made the comb, and who cannot make it; the Court adjudges the honey to the Bees."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 13; Thomas James' translation.*)

ÆSOP AT PLAY

AN Athenian one day found Æsop at play with a company of little boys, and began to jeer and laugh at him for it. The old fellow, who was too much of a joker himself to suffer others to ridicule him, took a bow, unstrung it and laid it upon the ground. Then, addressing his critic, he said:

"Now, Philosopher, explain this riddle, if you can, and tell us the meaning of that unstrung bow."

The man, after racking his brain, and scratching his head for a considerable time, to no purpose, at last gave it up and said that he could not solve the riddle.

"Why," said Æsop, laughing, "if you keep a bow always bent, it will presently break; but if you let it go slack, it will be ready for use when you need it."

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 14; from Bussey's Fables Original and Selected.*)

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE OWL

AN Owl, accustomed to feed at night and to sleep during the day, was greatly disturbed by the noise of a Grasshopper, and earnestly besought her to leave off chirping. The Grasshopper refused to desist, and chirped louder and louder the more the Owl entreated.

The Owl, when she saw that she could get no redress, and that her words were despised, attacked the chatterer by a stratagem. "Since I cannot sleep," she said, "on account of your song, which, believe me, is sweet as the lyre of Apollo, I shall indulge myself in drinking some nectar which Pallas lately gave me. If you do not dislike it, come to me, and we will drink it together." The Grasshopper, who was at once thirsty, and pleased with the praise of her voice, eagerly flew up. The Owl, coming forth from her hollow, seized her, and put her to death.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 16; Townsend's translation.*)

THE TREES UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE GODS

THE Gods, according to an ancient legend, made choice of certain trees to be under their special protection. Jupiter chose the oak, Venus the myrtle, Apollo the laurel, Cybele the pine, and Hercules the poplar. Minerva, wondering why they had preferred trees not yielding fruit, inquired the reason of their choice. Jupiter replied, "It is lest we should seem to covet the honour for the fruit." But said Minerva, "Let any one say what he will, the olive is more dear to me on account of its fruit." Then said Jupiter, "My daughter, you are rightly called wise; for unless what we do is useful, the glory of it is vain."

(*Phædrus; Fables Vol. III, No. 17; Townsend's translation.*)

THE PEACOCK AND JUNO

THE Peacock made complaint to Juno that, while the nightingale pleased every ear with his song, he no sooner opened his mouth than he became a laughing-stock to all who heard him. The God-

dess, to console him, said, "But you far excel in beauty and in size. The splendour of the emerald shines in your neck, and you unfold a tail gorgeous with painted plumage." "But for what purpose have I," said the bird, "this dumb beauty, so long as I am surpassed in song?" "The lot of each," replied Juno, "has been assigned by the will of the Fates—to thee, beauty; to the eagle, strength; to the nightingale, song; to the raven, favourable, and to the crow, unfavourable auguries. These are all contented with the endowments allotted to them."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. III, No. 18; Townsend's translation.)

ÆSOP AND THE IMPERTINENT FELLOW

AESOP'S master, having come home earlier than usual, and there being no other slave in the house, Æsop was ordered to get supper ready as fast as he could. So away he ran to light a candle, from which to kindle his fire; but since it still wanted an hour or two of sunset, he had to visit several houses before he could get a light; at last, however, he succeeded, and being in a hurry, he returned directly through the market-place, which was his nearest way home. As he passed along, an Impertinent Fellow in the crowd caught him by the sleeve, bent on cracking a joke at his expense.

"Tell me, Æsop," said he, "what are you doing with a lighted candle at this hour of day? Are you trying to light the sun to bed?"

"No," answered Æsop as he hurried on his way, "I am only looking for a real Man."

An ill-timed jest reveals an empty mind.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol III, No. 19; from Bussey's Fables, Original and Selected.)

THE SHE-GOATS AND THEIR BEARDS

THE She-goats having obtained by request from Jupiter the favour of a beard, the He-goats, sorely displeased, made complaint that the females equalled them in dignity. "Suffer them," said Jupiter, "to enjoy an empty honour, and to assume the badge of your nobler sex, so long as they are not your equals in strength or courage."

It matters little if those who are inferior to us in merit should be like us in outside appearances.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. IV, No. 15; Townsend's translation.)

THE HELMSMAN AND THE SAILORS

A CERTAIN ship had long been buffeted by raging seas, and all on board, expecting instant death, bewailed their fate. But suddenly the storm abated, and the sky cleared, and the ship rode steadily, rocked by gentle waves. The Sailors, in their relief, gave way to extravagant rejoicing; but the Helmsman, made wise by past danger, spoke a word of warning:

"You should learn to keep your rejoicings and your fears under better control, since all our life is a mixture of joy and sorrow."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. IV, No. 16.)

THE MOUNTAIN IN LABOUR

A MOUNTAIN was once greatly agitated. Loud groans and noises were heard; and crowds of people came from all parts to see what was the matter. While they were assembled in anxious ex-

pectation of some terrible calamity, out came a Mouse.

Don't make much ado about nothing.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. IV, No. 22; Townsend's translation.)

THE TWO SOLDIERS AND THE ROBBER

TWO Soldiers travelling together, were set upon by a Robber. The one fled away; the other stood his ground, and defended himself with his stout right hand. The Robber being slain, the timid companion runs up and draws his sword, and then, throwing back his travelling cloak, says, "I'll at him, and I'll take care he shall learn whom he has attacked." On this he who had fought with the Robber made answer, "I only wish that you had helped me just now, even if it had been only those words, for I should have been the more encouraged, believing them to be true; but now put up your sword in its sheath and hold your equally useless tongue, till you can deceive others who do not know you. I, indeed, who have experienced with what speed you run away, know right well that no dependence can be placed on your valour."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. V, No. 2; Townsend's translation.)

THE BALD MAN AND THE FLY

A FLY bit the bare head of a Bald Man, who, endeavouring to destroy it, gave himself a heavy slap. Then said the Fly mockingly, "You who have wished to revenge, even with death, the prick of a tiny insect, what will you do to yourself, who have added insult to injury?" The Bald Man replied, "I can easily make peace with myself, because I know there was no intention to hurt. But you, an

ill-favoured and contemptible insect, who delight in sucking human blood, I wish that I could have killed you, even if I had incurred a heavier penalty."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Vol. V, No. 3; Townsend's translation.*)

THE MOUNTEBANK AND THE COUNTRYMAN

A CERTAIN wealthy patrician, intending to treat the Roman people with some theatrical entertainment, publicly offered a reward to any one who would produce a novel spectacle. Incited by emulation, artists arrived from all parts to contest the prize, among whom a well-known witty Mountebank gave out that he had a new kind of entertainment that had never yet been produced on any stage. This report being spread abroad, brought the whole city together. The theatre could hardly contain the number of spectators. And when the artist appeared alone upon the stage, without any apparatus, or any assistants, curiosity and suspense kept the spectators in profound silence. On a sudden he thrust down his head into his bosom, and mimicked the squeaking of a young pig, so naturally, that the audience insisted upon it that he had one under his cloak, and ordered him to be searched; which being done, and nothing appearing, they loaded him with the most extravagant applause.

A Countryman among the audience observing what passed—"Oh!" says he, "I can do better than this;" and immediately gave out that he would perform the next day. Accordingly, on the morrow, a yet greater crowd was collected. Prepossessed, however, in favour of the Mountebank, they came rather to laugh at the Countryman than to pass a fair judgment on him. They both came out upon the stage. The Mountebank grunts away first, and calls forth the

greatest clapping and applause. Then the Countryman, pretending that he concealed a little pig under his garments (and he had, in fact, really got one) pinched its ear till he made it squeak. The people cried out that the Mountebank had imitated the pig much more naturally, and hooted to the Countryman to quit the stage; but he, to convict them to their face, produced the real pig from his bosom. "And now, gentlemen, you may see," said he, "what a pretty sort of judges you are!"

It is easier to convince a man against his senses than against his will.

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. V, No. 5; Thomas James' translation.)

THE BULL AND THE CALF

A BULL was striving with all his might to squeeze himself through a narrow passage which led to his stall. A young Calf came up, and offered to go before and show him the way by which he could manage to pass. "Save yourself the trouble," said the Bull; "I knew that way long before you were born."

(Phædrus, Fables, Vol. V, No. 9; Townsend's translation.)

PART III. B.

FABLES ATTRIBUTED TO PHÆDRUS

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THE TREES AND THE AXE



WOODMAN came into a forest to ask the Trees to give him a handle for his Axe. It seemed so modest a request that the principal Trees at once agreed to it, and it was settled among them that the plain homely Ash should furnish what was wanted. No sooner had the Woodman fitted the staff to his purpose, than he began laying about him on all sides, felling the noblest Trees in the wood. The Oak now seeing the whole matter too late, whispered to the Cedar, "The first concession has lost all; if we had not sacrificed our humble neighbour, we might have yet stood for ages ourselves."

When the rich surrender the rights of the poor, they give a handle to be used against their own privileges.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 5; Thomas James' translation.)

THE SNAIL AND THE MONKEY

A SNAIL, happening to find a mirror, was fascinated by its brightness, and climbing upon its glittering surface began to lick it lovingly, thinking that he could in no better way show his admiration than by thus dimming its splendour with a trail of slime.

A Monkey, seeing the mirror thus disfigured, said:

"Those who allow themselves to be trampled under foot by their inferiors deserve all the indignity that they suffer."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 8.*)

THE LION AND THE SHEPHERD

A LION, roaming through a forest, trod upon a thorn, and soon after came up towards a Shepherd, and fawned upon him, wagging his tail, as if he would say, "I am a suppliant, and seek your aid." The Shepherd boldly examined, and discovered the thorn, and placing his foot upon his lap, pulled it out and relieved the Lion of his pain, who returned into the forest. Some time after the Shepherd being imprisoned on a false accusation, is condemned "to be cast to the Lions," as the punishment of his imputed crime. The Lion, on being released from his cage, recognizes the Shepherd as the man who healed him, and, instead of attacking him, approaches and places his foot upon his lap. The King, as soon as he heard the tale, ordered the Lion to be set free again in the forest, and the Shepherd to be pardoned and restored to his friends.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 15; Townsend's translation.*)

THE HORSE AND THE ASS

A HORSE, proud of his fine trappings, met an Ass on the highway. The Ass being heavily laden moved slowly out of the way. "Hardly," said the Horse, "can I resist kicking you with my heels." The Ass held his peace, and made only a silent appeal to the justice of the gods. Not long afterwards the Horse, having become broken-winded, was sent by his owner to the farm. The Ass seeing him drawing a farm-wagon, thus derided him: "Where, O

boaster, are now all thy gay trappings, thou who art thyself reduced to the condition you so lately treated with contempt?"

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 17; Townsend's translation.*)

THE BIRDS, THE BEASTS AND THE BAT

ONCE upon a time there was a fierce war waged between the Birds and the Beasts. For a long while the issue of the battle was uncertain, and the Bat, taking advantage of his ambiguous nature, kept aloof and remained neutral. At length when the Beasts seemed to prevail, the Bat joined their forces and appeared active in the fight; but a rally being made by the Birds, which proved successful, he was found at the end of the day among the ranks of the winning party. A peace being speedily concluded, the Bat's conduct was condemned alike by both parties, and being acknowledged by neither, and so excluded from the terms of the truce, he was obliged to skulk off as best he could, and has ever since lived in holes and corners, never daring to show his face except in the duskiness of twilight.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 18; Townsend's translation.*)

THE APES AND THE TWO TRAVELLERS

TWO men, one of whom always spoke the truth and the other told nothing but lies, were travelling together, and by chance came to the land of Apes. One of the Apes, who had raised himself to be king, commanded them to be laid hold of, and brought before him, that he might know what was said of him among men. He ordered at the same time that all the Apes should be arranged in a long row on his right hand and on his left, and that a throne should

be placed for him, as was the custom among men. After these preparations, he signified his will that the two men should be brought before him, and greeted them with this salutation: "What sort of a King do I seem to you to be, O strangers?" The lying Traveller replied, "You seem to me a most mighty King." "And what is your estimate of those you see around me?" "These," he made answer, "are worthy companions of yourself, fit at least to be ambassadors and leaders of armies." The Ape and all his court, gratified with the lie, commanded a handsome present to be given to the flatterer. On this the truthful Traveller thought within himself, "If so great a reward be given for a lie, with what gift may not I be rewarded, if, according to my custom, I shall tell the truth?" The Ape quickly turned to him. "And pray how do I and these my friends around me seem to you?" "Thou art," he said, "a most excellent Ape, and all these thy companions after thy example are excellent Apes too." The King of the Apes, enraged at hearing these truths, gave him over to the teeth and claws of his companions.

A smooth lie wins favour with evil natures, where the honest truth may cause a good man's downfall.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 24; Townsend's translation.)

THE STORK, THE GOOSE AND THE HAWK

ONE day when the Stork had come to a favourite pool, he saw a Goose repeatedly diving under the water, and asked why she did so. She replied:

"It is a habit with us Geese, for we find much of our food in the mud at the bottom of the pool, and at the same time we safely escape the attack of Hawks when they swoop down upon us."

"I am much stronger than any Hawk," the Stork replied. "If you will form a friendship with me, you may safely laugh at your enemy."

The credulous Goose eagerly accepting the protection offered her, straightway waddled out into the fields. Before long a Hawk passing that way and swooping down seized the Goose in his cruel talons. As the Stork flew safely away the unhappy Goose called after him: "Whoever trusts himself to a feeble protector deserves to come to a bad end."

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 26.)

THE CROW AND THE SHEEP

A TROUBLESOME Crow seated herself on the back of a Sheep. The Sheep, much against his will, carried her backward and forward for a long time, and at last said, "If you had treated a dog in this way, you would have had your deserts from his sharp teeth." To this the Crow replied, "I despise the weak, and yield to the strong. I know whom I may bully, and whom I must flatter; and I thus prolong my life to a good old age."

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 27; Townsend's translation.)

THE HORSE AND THE ASS

THE Ass one day begged the Horse for a small share of his hay. "Gladly," said the Horse, "if there were any to spare,—and a generous one too, as befits my own dignity. But as soon as I get back to our stable to-night I will see that you have a bag full of oats." The Ass replied: "Since you refuse me a small favour now, how can I believe that you will do me a bigger one by-and-by?"

Those who offer big promises in place of small help will prove to be unwilling givers.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 29.*)

THE FLEA AND THE CAMEL

AS a Camel plodded on through the desert, weighted down with many burdens, a Flea perched contentedly on his back, greatly enjoying her exalted position. After they had journeyed a long distance and towards sunset reached the halting-place, the Flea at once skipped nimbly to the ground.

"Did you see," she asked, "how quickly I got down, so as not to tire your poor back a moment longer?"

"Thank you," replied the Camel, "but to tell the truth, I did not feel your weight while you were on my back, nor do I notice the difference, now that you are down!"

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 31.*)

THE EAGLE AND THE KITE

AN Eagle, overwhelmed with sorrow, sat upon the branches of a tree, in company with a Kite. "Why," said the Kite, "do I see you with such a rueful look?" "I seek," she replied, "for a mate suitable for me, and am not able to find one." "Take me," returned the Kite, "I am much stronger than you are." "Why, are you able to secure the means of living by your plunder?" "Well, I have often caught and carried away an ostrich in my talons." The Eagle, persuaded by these words, accepted him as her mate. Shortly after the nuptials, the Eagle said, "Fly off, and bring me back the ostrich

you promised me." The Kite, soaring aloft into the air, brought back the shabbiest possible mouse, foul-smelling from the length of time it had lain about the fields. "Is this," said the Eagle, "the faithful fulfilment of your promise to me?" The Kite replied, "That I might attain to your royal hand, there is nothing that I would not have promised, however much I knew that I must fail in the performance."

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix I, No. 34.*)

THE SWALLOW AND THE OTHER BIRDS

ONCE when the Birds had all gathered together in a certain spot, they saw a man sowing his field with flax. When the Swallow saw that the other Birds paid no attention to this, she called them all to her and gave them this advice:

"A great danger threatens us if we let this seed grow and ripen!" The other Birds all laughed at her. When the flax had begun to sprout, the Swallow again warned them: "Destruction is approaching," she cried. "Fall to work and uproot these fatal seeds; for if we let them grow, nets will be made from the flax, and we shall fall victims to man's cleverness!" But the other Birds still laughed at the Swallow's words, and foolishly spurned her wise counsels. Soon afterwards the cautious Swallow went and made her home among men, building her nest in safety among the rafters of a barn. But the other Birds, who had scorned her sage advice, were caught and perished in the nets woven from the flax.

The foolish turn a deaf ear to wise counsel.

(*Phædrus, Fables, Appendix II, No. 12.*)

THE PARTRIDGE AND THE FOX

A PARTRIDGE was once perched on an upper branch of a tree, when a Fox came up and at once addressed her as follows: "Beautiful Partridge, how lovely are your features! Your beak is like coral, and your legs outrival the brilliance of royal purple. If only you were asleep, you would be more beautiful still." The trusting bird, like a little simpleton, at once closed her eyes; whereupon the Fox swiftly leaped high in the air and caught her in his mouth. The Partridge, lamenting her fate, poured forth a broken, tearful prayer: "Oh, Fox I beseech you by the fame of your artful ways eat me if you will but first praise me once again before I die!" The Fox moved by this prayer opened his mouth and the Partridge quickly made her escape. "Why did I have to speak?" lamented the disappointed Fox; and the Partridge replied, "Why did I have to close my eyes when I was not even sleepy?"

This fable is for those who talk when there is no need, and for those who sleep when they should keep watch.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix II, No. 13.)

ÆSOP AND THE RUNAWAY SLAVE

A SLAVE, well known in the neighbourhood, was running away from a cruel master, when he fell in with Æsop. "Why so frightened?" asked the latter.

"I will tell you the truth, Father Æsop,—for you have well earned that name, because we can all safely confide our troubles to you. I am tired of beatings, and there is no end to the blows. Besides

that, I am put to the hardest sort of work. If my master feasts at home, I wait upon him all night long; if he is invited out, I watch till day-break in the roadway. I have earned my liberty, and I am treated like a dog. If I felt that it was my own fault, I would bear it patiently. Unhappy creature that I am, not only am I half starved, but I must suffer besides this unending cruelty. It is for these reasons, which have taken me so long to tell, that I have decided to run away, wherever my feet will take me."

"Now, listen," answered Æsop. "You have suffered all these hardships, although you have done nothing wrong. How much worse suffering do you think awaits you, if you run away?" The slave took the advice and returned to his master.

If you already have troubles, it is foolish to seek more.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix II, No. 19.)

THE COCK AND THE CATS WHO BORE HIS LITTER

A COCK once employed several Cats to carry his litter when he appeared in public. When the Fox saw him proudly borne along, she murmured to herself, "I warn you, friend Cock, to be on your guard. For if you study the faces of those Cats, they look as though they were carrying off a captured prey, and not an unwelcome burden." Before long, the Cats, becoming hungry, made short work of their master, and divided the object of their crime between them.

A false sense of security often leads to danger.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix II, No. 16.)

THE FAMISHED BEAR

ONE autumn, when the crop of woodland berries had begun to fail, a hungry Bear made his way down to the rocky seashore, and seizing a big stone between his hairy limbs slowly lowered himself into the water. Before long a number of crabs had laid fast hold upon the thick fur of his hide, whereupon the Bear climbed back upon dry land, shook off the haul of sea-food he had netted, and settled down to enjoy their tender meat at his leisure.

Even the dullest brains are sharpened by hunger.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix II, No. 21.)

THE SNAKE AND THE LIZARD

A SNAKE, happening one day upon a Lizard, seized hold of it and prepared to swallow it down his rapacious throat. The Lizard, however, quickly snatched up a small stick that lay near and held it cross-wise between its clenched teeth. The ends of the stick, catching the corners of the greedy jaws, neatly turned the trick upon the Snake, who, half choked, must needs let his victim escape unhurt.

A quick wit often makes up for lack of strength.

(Phædrus, Fables, Appendix II, No. 23.)

PART IV

AVIANUS, ABSTEMIUS, ETC.

PART IV

AVIANUS, ABSTEMIUS, ETC.

THE BOY AND THE THIEF



BOY sat weeping at the brink of a well, with his lips all puckered in apparent grief. A rascally Thief, finding him with tear-stained face, asked what had happened to make him so unhappy. The Boy then told how his rope had broken in two and let a Crock of Gold fall into the well. At once the Thief eagerly threw off his cloak; the next moment he had stripped himself and plunged to the bottom of the well. The Boy promptly wrapped the cloak around his own thin shoulders, crawled under a bramble thicket and lay there, safely hidden. When the disappointed Thief at last struggled back from his dangerous and fruitless search, he seated himself to rest beside the well, considerably sadder and wiser, and found what comfort he could in the thought:

“Any one who is so foolish as to believe that a Crock of Gold will float on the surface of water is lucky if he gets off with no worse loss than his cloak!”

(Avianus, Fable 25.)

THE CROW AND THE WATER JAR

A THIRSTY Crow found a large Water Jar, with only a little water remaining at the bottom. For some time she tried in vain to tip the Jar and pour out the water on the ground, so that she might slake her thirst. But when she found that she was only wasting her efforts, exasperation sharpened her wits. By dropping pebbles into the Jar, she gradually raised the level of the water to the brim, and was then able to drink at pleasure.

This fable teaches that it is sometimes better to imitate the Crow and attain our desires by cleverness rather than by force.

(Avianus, Fable 27.)

THE FLY AND THE CHARIOT

A FLY was seated on a racing Chariot that was being driven at full speed. In their rapid flight the feet of the horses and the rims of the whirring wheels flung up great clouds of dust. The Fly took all the credit to itself, and cried proudly:

"See what a dust I am raising!"

(Abstemiuss, Fable 16.)

THE EEL AND THE SNAKE

WHY is it," asked the Eel of the Snake, "that although I'm in all respects and beyond question quite like you in appearance, men are always seeking to catch me, while they leave you in peace?"

"Because," replied the Snake, "if they went after me they would not escape unpunished."

The man who knows how to protect himself is safe from his enemies.

*(Abstemi-
us, Fable 17.)*

THE FISH THAT LEAPED FROM THE FRYING-PAN

SOME Fish were put to fry alive in a pan full of fat. "Come," said one of them, "let us jump out of here, for if we do not, we shall surely die."

The Fishes all believed this to be true, so they all leaped from the frying-pan into the fire. Their suffering now, on the live coals, was much greater, and they began to give way to bitter complaints against the Fish who had first given them the fatal advice. "Thanks to you," they said, "we have doubled our pain, without after all escaping from death."

Let us be careful, in our eagerness to escape the ills of life, that we do not incur some other and much worse evil.

*(Abstemi-
us, Fable 20.)*

THE YOUTH AND THE OLD MAN

A YOUTH met an Old Man bent double with the weight of his years, until he was curved like a strung bow.

"Grandfather," he said mockingly, "don't you want to sell me your bow?"

"You would be wasting your money, my lad," replied the Old

Man. "But if you live to be my age, Nature will give you a bow like mine, for nothing, even if you don't want it."

Let us not laugh at the infirmities of age, for they will all come upon us in turn in our own last days.

(Abstemius, Fable 24.)

THE STREAM AND ITS SOURCE

A STREAM one day said to its Source, "Lazy good-for-nothing that you are! In spite of the plentiful current of water that you give, you do not nourish even the smallest fish! Throughout the whole length of my course, on the contrary, one may see more fishes, constantly darting and playing than can be found in any other stream of the same size. In this way I am of pleasure and service to the whole district. But you might as well be dead, for you sustain no life in you."

The Source, indignant at these unjust words, made no reply, but began to decrease the quantity of water that she had until now furnished to the Stream. Before long she stopped the supply of water entirely. The result was that the level of the Stream gradually fell lower and lower, until at last the water failed completely and the Stream and the fishes disappeared together.

(Abstemius, Fable 57.)

THE RIVER SHARK WHO WOULD BE KING OF THE OCEAN

A SHARK, established at the mouth of a river, ruled over all the fishes living in its waters. As he was considerably larger and stronger than the others they humbly accepted his authority. In

fact he was their King, and they treated him as such.

The Shark's pride soon outgrew his position. "Why," he asked himself, "should I not extend my kingdom?"

Taking advantage of favourable circumstances he left the river and still intent on his plan of enlarging his kingdom, swam far out to sea. "I must," he told himself, "bring all the fishes in these broad waters under my control."

He was still dreaming of conquering the whole empire of the waves, when he encountered the Whale. Chilled with horror and trembling with fear, our would-be conqueror of the seas fled back at top speed, and shamefacedly regained the mouth of the river. Since then he has had no desire to stray from his home waters.

The wise man knows when he is well off and guards himself against foolish ambition.

(Abstemi^{us}, Fable 82.)

THE BEAR AND HIS MATE

A BEAR, quarrelling with his Mate, became so violent in his rage that with his claws he scratched out both her eyes. He was so sorry afterwards for having done this that he gnawed off all his claws with his teeth. Later, he came back to his cave and tried to make up the quarrel:

"My dear," he said, "for your sake I have deprived myself of my best weapons of war."

"What good does that do me?" answered his Mate, "now that you have scratched out my eyes, and I am blind!"

Repentance is powerless to undo injuries when once done.

(Abstemi^{us}, Fable 147.)

THE MICE IN COUNCIL

ONCE upon a time the Mice being sadly distressed by the persecution of the Cat, resolved to call a meeting, to decide upon the best means of getting rid of this continual annoyance. Many plans were discussed and rejected; at last a young Mouse got up and proposed that a Bell should be hung round the Cat's neck, that they might for the future always have notice of her coming, and so be able to escape. This proposition was hailed with the greatest applause, and was agreed to at once unanimously. Upon which an old Mouse, who had sat silent all the while, got up and said that he considered the contrivance most ingenious, and that it would, no doubt, be quite successful; but he had only one short question to put, namely, which of them it was who would Bell the Cat?

It is one thing to propose, another to execute.

(Ætæmæus, Fable 195. Thomas James' translation.)

THE ABBOT AND THE FLEA

AN Abbot, having caught a Flea, said to him, "At last I have caught you. Many a time have you bitten me; now that I have you I will never let you go, but shall put you to death."

"Holy Father," said the Flea, "since you are going to kill me, place me in the palm of your hand, so that I may freely confess my sins to you."

The Abbot, moved by pious pity, placed the Flea in the middle of his palm. The Flea at once made a great jump, and by his jump, escaped. The Abbot called loudly to him to return and confess his sins, but the Flea would not return.

There are many people who finding themselves in a tight place, promise much, but when set at liberty fail to keep their promises.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE CRANE WHO QUARRELLED WITH HIS MATE

A CRANE once quarrelled with his Mate, and pecked out one of her eyes. Afterwards, feeling much ashamed of having done her such a terrible injury, he prepared to leave home and travel to a far-distant country. A Crow, meeting him just as he was setting forth, asked the reason for his journey. The Crane replied that he had pecked out his Mate's eye with his beak, and that because of his shame he felt that he must leave the country.

The Crow replied, "Have you not still got the same beak?" The Crane answered in surprise: "Certainly I have."

"Then," said the Crow, "where will you flee to? Because, wherever you go you must carry your beak with you!"

A man cannot run away from his conscience.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE TOAD AND THE FROG

THE Toad which lives on land once asked the Frog, which lives in the pond, to give her some water to drink. "Surely," said the Frog, and she gave her all the water she wanted. Later the Frog, being hungry, asked the Toad to give her something to eat. The Toad answered: "No, indeed, I won't. I am so afraid that there

won't be enough food for myself that half the time I don't eat sufficient for my own good."

Generosity is wasted on a selfish nature.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE CAT AND THE STORK

WE should do well to imitate the example of the Stork, who was carrying home an eel, as dinner for herself and her children. A Cat, who was fond of fish but hated to wet his feet, seeing the Stork, said to her:

"Most beautiful of all birds, with your brilliant red beak and the whitest of feathers, pray tell me, is your beak as red on the inside as it is on the outside?"

But the Stork would not reply nor even open her mouth, because she did not wish to drop the eel. This made the Cat angry, and he began to abuse the Stork roundly, saying:

"You surely must be deaf or at least dumb! Can't you answer me, you miserable beast? Is it possible that you eat snakes, which are poisonous, unclean creatures? Every clean animal likes clean food, but you evidently prefer yours foul and unclean. You certainly must be the filthiest of all birds!"

But the Stork, never answering a word, kept steadily on her way, holding fast to the eel.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE BIRD OF SAINT MARTIN

AMONG the Birds there is one known as the Bird of Saint Martin, which is no larger than a Wren, and whose legs are long and slender like reeds. It happened once at the festival of Saint Martin,

when the sun was shining brightly, that the little Bird of Saint Martin flung itself down upon the ground beside a tree and rolling over kicked its legs high in the air exclaiming:

"There, if the Heavens should fall I could hold them up with my legs!"

Just then a single leaf fell from a branch of the tree and fluttered down upon the Bird. The latter sprang up, half dead with fear, and flew away crying shrilly, "Oh, Saint Martin, Saint Martin, save your little Bird!"

There are many like this Bird of Saint Martin, whose faith is strong in times of safety, but weak in times of danger.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE CAT'S BEAUTIFUL WIFE

A CERTAIN Tom Cat had lately acquired a beautiful Wife who contemptuously laughed at his requests that she would stay at home, and persisted in going out for long walks with other Cats. The Cat complained to his friends about his Wife's love of gaiety, and one of his friends gave him this advice:

"Singe her fur in splotches here and there, and she will be glad enough to stay at home!"

The Tom Cat followed this advice, and the beautiful Wife ceased her roaming and stayed at home.

Personal vanity often leads us into temptation.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE FROG'S BEAUTIFUL SON

IT happened once on a time that the Animals met together in Council. The Frog being unable himself to attend sent his only son, who in his haste forgot to wear his new shoes. So the Frog looked around for some swift messenger to take them to the Council. Presently he saw the Hare, which is a strong swift runner, so he called to him and made a bargain with him to carry the new shoes to his son. The Hare, however, objected, "How am I to know which is your son among so many animals at the Council?"

The Frog replied, "Look for the one that is the most beautiful among all the Animals,—for that is my son."

"Then it must be the Peacock," said the Hare, "or perhaps the Dove, who is your son?"

"Certainly not," answered the Frog, "for the flesh of the Dove is dark, and the Peacock has ugly feet."

"Then tell me, pray," said the Hare, "what does your son look like?"

"He is very like me," replied the Frog. "He has a head like mine, a stomach like mine, legs and feet like mine; in short, he is my own beautiful son. Take the shoes to him."

Because he loved his son, the Frog thought him beautiful. Love is blind.

(Odo of Sherington. Fable 13.)

THE ASS PRETENDING THAT HE WAS ILL

A CERTAIN Ass had noticed that bread and oats and corn, and other good things were often given to the Pigs, although they did no work, and after they had eaten they would lie down and

sleep. The Ass said to himself, "These Pigs lead an easy life; they eat and drink and do nothing else whatever, while I toil all day long and eat very little. I will pretend that I am sick." Accordingly, he lay down upon the ground and remained comfortably stretched out, but with his eyes closed as though sick. His master, finding him on the ground, tried first to rouse him with a whip; but the Ass refused to move. He merely groaned and continued to lie at his ease. Then the master said to his wife, "Evidently our Ass is sick." The wife replied, "In that case let us give him some oats and corn and bread, and leave him a pail of water." They did as the wife had suggested; and although at first the Ass ate but sparingly, his appetite increased, and presently he began to grow fat, and said to himself, "I surely am having an easy life!" Meanwhile, the Pigs had been sufficiently fattened, and the master sent for the butcher who came with axe and knife and killed and dressed the Pigs. When he saw this, the Ass was filled with terror, and thought surely that they would kill him too now that he was fat. "Far rather," he said to himself, "would I labour and lead my former life of toil than be idle and fattened like the Pigs for the butcher!" So going forth from the stable the Ass pranced and frolicked around his master, who promptly put him back to his former work.

(Odo of Sherington.)

THE WOLF AND THE HARE

ONCE upon a time when the Wolf and the Hare chanced to meet, the former said, "Friend Hare, among all animals you are the most timid. Would you ever dare enter into any kind of contest with any other animal?"

At which the Hare replied, "Yes, indeed I would, even with you, friend Wolf, big as you are and I so small!"

The Wolf was indignant and said hotly: "I will bet ten gold pieces against one that I can give you a good thrashing."

The Hare accepted the terms of the challenge, and they took their places on the battle ground. The Wolf rushed straight at the Hare intending to seize and devour him. The Hare nimbly darted aside and took to his heels, running at top speed, while the Wolf followed as best he could. After a long chase back and forth and round and round, the Wolf at last, utterly tired out, stopped in his course and flung himself on the ground unable to run a step further. Then the Hare said to him, "Friend Wolf, you are beaten, and have measured your length upon the ground."

The Wolf retorted, "Indeed I am not beaten, for you did not even wait to meet my attack."

To which the Hare rejoined, "What sort of a fight would it have been had I waited for you, since you are three times my size, and have only to open your mouth to swallow me whole? I have no other way of fighting than that of running away, and since I have beaten you at that, pay me what you owe."

The Wolf still refused to pay, and the argument grew hot and fierce until at last the matter was referred to the Lion who held that the Hare, having fought by the best means he knew, had fairly won.

(Odo of Sherington.)

GOLD AND LEAD

L EAD one day, puffed up with pride, went to Gold and said boldly, "Why do you think yourself so much better than me, brother Gold? Am I not made of the same material? Are we not both

members of the family of metals? By what right then do you look down upon me? Do you not see that I am highly esteemed by the world as well as yourself? Come with me and be tried by fire, and you will see that I, too, have sterling qualities." To this Gold replied: "I know, brother Lead, that you are a metal equally with myself. For the same creator made us both, and we each remain as he made us. I wish you no harm. Keep the rights that are yours and go your way. But if you insist upon challenging me to the test of fire, come with me and we will prove ourselves, and it will be clearly shown what are your true qualities and your rightful victory." When the two metals entered together the fire, the Lead promptly melted and vanished. But the Gold was purified and came forth even brighter than before.

There are many men like the Lead, who are puffed up with empty pride, and believe that they have great qualities which they have not; but when put to the test they are reduced to nothing, as the Lead was when tried by fire.

(Nicholas Pergamenus, Dialogi Creaturarum, No. 19.)

THE LOCK AND THE KEY

THERE was once an excellent Key which opened and closed its Lock so smoothly that it was prized highly by its master. After a time, however, the ungrateful Lock tried to quarrel with the Key, saying: "You plague of my existence! Why are you continually molesting me, day and night, thrusting yourself upon me and wrenching me backward and forward? Cease this annoyance or I will twist you out of shape and cast you aside." The Key replied: "You speak foolishly, sister, since it is through me that you are guarded

and kept from harm. If you choose to thrust me out, you yourself will be discarded and broken." But the Lock refused to be placated by these words, but on the contrary closed her Key-hole entirely, and refused the Key admission. Consequently, the master found that, in spite of his excellent Key, he was unable to open his door. At this the master became very angry and tore off the offending Lock, breaking it to pieces. Hereupon the Key taunted the Lock, and said: "Nothing is more vulgar than family quarrels. Besides, it is the part of wisdom to keep on good terms with those on whom you depend for a living."

(*Nicholas Pergamenus, Dialogi Creaturarum, No. 23.*)

THE FROG AND THE CRAB

WHEN a certain Frog saw a Crab swimming along close to the river bank, he said to himself, "Who is this ugly, misshapen creature which dares to muddy the water of my river? Since I am such a strong and powerful Frog, ruling over both land and water, I will at once approach the intruder and drive him away." So saying, the Frog gave a leap, which brought him in front of the Crab, and said: "Are you not ashamed, you wretched creature, to invade and trouble my peaceful waters? Dingy, insignificant beast that you are, do you not blush to befoul this bright, clear-running stream?" The Crab, meanwhile, continued to scuttle backward, according to his habit, and answered: "Do not speak to me in that tone, brother, because I would much rather continue to live in peace and friendship with you. Therefore do not try to pick a quarrel with me." The Frog, seeing that the Crab continued to scuttle backward, thought that he did so from fear, and accordingly, became more hostile in word

and action, saying: "Don't try to run away from me you coward, for you cannot escape me! This very day I shall feed your flesh to the fishes." The Crab, seeing plainly that he could not escape, faced around and seized the Frog, and tore him to pieces with his powerful claws, saying, "He who finds that he cannot avoid a quarrel owes it to himself to put up a bold fight."

(Nicholas Pergamenus, Dialogi Creaturarum, No. 47.)

THE MILLER, HIS SON AND THEIR ASS

A MILLER and his Son were driving their Ass to a neighbouring fair to sell him. They had not gone far when they met with a troop of girls returning from the town, talking and laughing. "Look there!" cried one of them, "did you ever see such fools, to be trudging along the road on foot, when they might be riding!" The old Man, hearing this, quietly bade his Son get on the Ass, and walked along merrily by the side of him. Presently they came up to a group of old men in earnest debate. "There!" said one of them, "it proves what I was a-saying. What respect is shown to old age in these days? Do you see that idle young rogue riding, while his old father has to walk?—Get down, you scapegrace! and let the old Man rest his weary limbs." Upon this the Father made his Son dismount, and got up himself. In this manner they had not proceeded far when they met a company of women and children. "Why, you lazy old fellow!" cried several tongues at once, "how can you ride upon the beast, while that poor little lad can hardly keep pace by the side of you. The good-natured Miller stood corrected, and immediately took up his Son behind him. They had now almost reached the town. "Pray, honest friend," said a townsman, "is that Ass your own?"

"Yes," says the old Man. "O! One would not have thought so," said the other, "by the way you load him. Why, you two fellows are better able to carry the poor beast than he you!" "Anything to please you," said the old Man; "we can but try." So, alighting with his Son, they tied the Ass's legs together, and by the help of a pole endeavoured to carry him on their shoulders over a bridge that led to the town. This was so entertaining a sight that the people ran out in crowds to laugh at it; till the Ass, not liking the noise nor his situation, kicked asunder the cords that bound him, and, tumbling off the pole, fell into the river. Upon this the old Man, vexed and ashamed, made the best of his way home again—convinced that by endeavouring to please everybody he had pleased nobody, and lost his Ass into the bargain.

(Æternus, Fables, Vol. V, No. 20. Thomas James' translation.)

BOOK TWO
ORIENTAL FABLES

PART I

HINDOO FABLES

PART I

HINDOO FABLES

THE FOWLER AND THE PIGEONS



ON the banks of the Godavery River there stood a large Silk-cotton-tree to which the birds came at night from all quarters to roost. Now, on a certain night, when the moon was setting behind the western hills and the night was nearly over, a Fowler came and spread his net under the Silk-cotton-tree, scattered a few grains of rice on the ground, and hid himself at a short distance. At this moment the King of the Pigeons, named Speckle-Neck, chanced to be passing through the sky with his companions, and caught sight of the grains of rice. Now, all Pigeons are very fond of rice. Nevertheless, the King of the Pigeons said to his companions:

“How is it possible for rice to be lying on the ground in this untravelled forest? We will inquire into this, of course, but we do not like the look of it. Love of rice may lead to our ruin. We must be very careful.”

“Oh, it’s all very well to talk of being careful!” rejoined a young and foolish Pigeon. “Being too careful may cost us a good dinner.”

At this all the Pigeons flew down to feast upon the rice, and were promptly caught in the net. Immediately they all began to blame the

young Pigeon whose thoughtlessness had led them into trouble. But when King Speckle-Neck heard their reproaches he said:

"Do not let us quarrel and blame one another; but let us work together and find some remedy. Listen and I will tell you what to do: At one and the same moment and with one purpose we must all rise up under the net and fly off together, net and all. For even small things have great strength when they work together. Even a furious Elephant can be bound with ropes of twisted grass if there are enough of them."

Upon considering this advice the other Pigeons thought it good, and decided to follow it. Accordingly, all together at the same moment they flew upward and bore away the net with them. The Fowler, who was still hiding at a distance, followed them for a time; but presently the Pigeons and the net passed out of sight, and he had to give up the chase.

(Hûopadeça. Book I. Introduction. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE TIGER AND THE TRAVELLER

ONCE upon a time, in the Deccan forest, an old Tiger was sitting on the bank of a pool, stretching forth his fore-paws, and calling out:

"Ho! ho! Ye travellers, take this golden bangle!"

Presently a certain covetous fellow, passing that way, heard the Tiger, and said to himself, "This is a bit of luck,—but I must not get too near to the Tiger's claws for all that." Thereupon he called out and asked, "Where is your bangle?"

The Tiger stretched out his paw still further and showed the bangle.

"How am I to take it?" asked the traveller. "Can I trust myself near to such a fierce looking brute as you are?"

"Listen," replied the Tiger, "in my younger days I know that I was very wicked. I killed cows and men without number—even holy Brahmins—and I was punished for it by losing my wife and children; I haven't a relation left. But lately I met a holy man who taught me to practise the duty of charity, and alms-giving. Besides, I am very old, and my claws and teeth are all gone. So you need not fear to trust me. I have kept this golden bangle to give to any one who seems in need. You look poor, so I will give it to you."

Hearing this, the covetous traveller made up his mind to trust the Tiger, and waded into the pool. But he soon found himself stuck deep in the mud, and unable to move.

"Ho! ho!" said the Tiger, "are you stuck fast in the mud? Wait and I will come and pull you out!"

So saying, the Tiger sprang upon the unhappy traveller and quickly made a meal of him.

(Bhāṭopadeya. Book I. Fable I. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE JACKAL, THE DEER AND THE CROW

FAR away in Behar there is a forest called Champak-Grove, in which a Deer and a Crow had long lived in close friendship. The Deer, roaming at large through the forest, happy, well fed and fat of limb, was one day seen by a Jackal.

"Ho, ho!" thought the Jackal on observing him, "I should very much like some of that Deer's tender meat for my dinner! It might

be managed if I could only win his confidence." With these thoughts the Jackal approached the Deer, and greeted him with the words:

"Good morning to you, friend Deer!"

"Pray, who are you?" asked the Deer.

"I am Small-Wit, the Jackal," replied the other; "And I live in the woods here with no more friends than if I were dead. But now that I have met such a friend as you, I feel as though I were starting life over again, surrounded by my relations. Please consider me your most devoted admirer."

"Very well, let us be friends," said the Deer. And then, as the light of day was fading, the two went together to the Deer's home. At this same spot, on the branch of a Champak tree, lived the Deer's friend, Sharp-Sense, the Crow. Seeing the other two approaching together, Sharp-Sense called down:

"Who is this Number Two, friend Deer?"

"It is Small-Wit, the Jackal," answered the Deer. "He wants to be friends with us."

"You should not be so ready to make friends with a stranger," replied Sharp-Sense.

"Sir!" interrupted the Jackal, with some warmth, "On the day that you first met the Deer, were you not equally of unknown family and character? Yet I am told that the friendship between you has daily grown stronger. To be sure I am only Small-Wit, the Jackal, —but you know the old saying, 'In a land where there are no wise men, the men of small wit are Princes.' The Deer has accepted me as a friend, won't you do the same?"

"What is the good of so much talking?" interrupted the Deer, "let us all three live together and be happy!"

"All right," said Sharp-Sense, "have it as you will."

Accordingly, beginning the next morning, they all three set forth daily, each for his own feeding ground, returning to their common home at night. One day the Jackal led the Deer aside and whispered, "Friend Deer, in one corner of this wood there is a field full of sweet young wheat. Come with me and I will show you." So the Deer followed the Jackal, and learned where the wheat field lay. And after this he returned every day to eat the tender green wheat. At last the owner of the field spied the Deer, and set a snare for him; and the next time that the Deer came to the field he found himself caught in a strong net. After struggling vainly for some time the Deer lifted up his voice and lamented:

"Here I am, caught fast in this net, and it will truly be the net of death for me if no friend comes to my rescue!"

Presently, Small-Wit, the Jackal, who had been lurking near by, made his appearance, and said to himself with a chuckle, "Oho! My scheme begins to bear fruit. When the Deer is cut up, his bones and his gristle and his blood will fall to my share and will make me many delicious dinners!" At this moment the Deer caught sight of Small-Wit and called out joyfully, "Oh, my friend, this is indeed fortunate! If you will only gnaw through the meshes of this net I shall be free!"

Small-Wit made no answer, but examined the net very carefully. "The net will certainly hold," he muttered to himself. Then, turning to the Deer he added, "My good friend, these strings, as you see, are made of raw-hide; and since this is a fast day it would be a sin for me even to gnaw them. To-morrow morning, if you still wish me to, I shall be very glad to help you."

After the Jackal had gone the Crow, who, upon returning home had missed his friend the Deer, and had been seeking him everywhere, suddenly discovered him in the net, and seeing his sad plight exclaimed:

"How in the world did this happen to you, my poor friend?"

"It happened through not taking a friend's advice," replied the Deer sadly.

"Where is that villain, Small-Wit?" asked the Crow.

"He is hanging around somewhere near by," answered the Deer miserably, "waiting for a taste of my flesh."

"Well," sighed the Crow, "I warned you. I knew that treacherous Jackal would sooner or later play one of his evil tricks. There is nothing we can do until morning."

When day broke the Crow saw the master of the field approaching with a heavy club in his hand.

"Now friend Deer," said Sharp-Sense, "you must stiffen out your legs and lie very still, as if you were dead. I will hop around and pretend to peck at your eyes with my beak; and the moment I give a loud croak, you must spring up and take to your heels."

The Deer stiffened out his legs and lay very still, just as the Crow had told him, and was soon discovered by the master of the field, whose eyes opened wide with delight. "Ah," said he, "the Deer has died of his own accord; that saves me the trouble of killing him." So saying, he released the Deer, and began to gather up his net. At that instant Sharp-Sense uttered a loud croak, and the Deer sprang up and made off at full speed. And the club, which the angry farmer hurled after him struck Small-Wit, the Jackal, who was skulking close by, and killed him.

(Hitopadeśa. Book I. Fable 2. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE VULTURE, THE CAT AND THE BIRDS

ON the banks of the Ganges River there is a cliff called Vulture-crag on which a fig-tree once grew. The tree was hollow, and in its shelter lived an old Vulture, named Gray-Pate, whose sad fortune it was to have lost both eyes and talons. The other birds, that roosted in the branches of the tree felt sorry for the poor old fellow, and gave him a share of their food, and in that way he barely managed to live. When the summer season came the old tree echoed with the chirping of the young birds in the nests overhead. One day, when the parent birds were all gone away in search of food, a certain Cat, Long-Ear by name, came to the tree intending to make a dinner of some of the little birds in the nests. But at sight of the cat they set up such a shrill screaming that they roused up Gray-Pate:

"Who comes here?" he croaked. When Long-Ear saw the old Vulture, he was badly frightened, but as it was too late to run away he decided to take his chances, and came nearer. "My Lord," he said, "I have the honour to salute you."

"Who are you?" asked the blind Vulture.

"Please your Lordship, I am a Cat," answered Long-Ear.

"Be off with you, Cat, or I shall slay you," said the Vulture.

"I am ready to die, if I deserve death," answered the Cat. "But first hear what I have to say. I am a good, pious Cat. I say my prayers, I bathe and I eat no meat. The birds who live in this tree are constantly praising you for your goodness and wisdom. Accordingly, I have come here to ask you to teach me philosophy and law."

"Yes, but cats like meat, and there are young birds in this tree."

"Sir," said the Cat, "I have overcome my wicked desire for meat, and have learned the Golden Rule, that our first duty is to refrain from harming any living thing."

Thus the Cat won the old Vulture's confidence, entered the hollow tree, and lived there. And day after day he climbed the tree to steal some of the little birds, and brought them down into the hollow for his dinner. Meanwhile, the parent birds, whose little ones were being eaten, went searching for them in all quarters. Long-Ear becoming aware of this, and fearing detection, quietly slipped out of the hollow and made his escape. Afterwards, when the birds began to search nearer home, they found the bones of the young ones in the hollow of the tree, where the blind Gray-Pate lived. The birds at once decided that their nestlings had been killed and eaten by the old Vulture, and accordingly they executed him.

(Hitopadeśa. Book I. Fable 3. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

GOLDEN-SKIN, THE MOUSE

IN the town of Champaka there once lived a beggar Priest, named Chudakarna, whose habit was to place his begging-dish upon a certain shelf, with such food in it as he had not eaten, and go to sleep beside it. As soon as he slept, a certain Mouse named Golden-Skin, came out of its hole, jumped up on the shelf and devoured whatever food was left in the begging-dish. One day another beggar Priest, a close friend, named Vinakarna, came to pay a visit; and he noticed that all the while they were conversing, Chudakarna kept striking the ground with a split bamboo cane, to frighten the Mouse away.

"Why don't you listen to what I am saying?" asked Vinakarna.

"I am listening," replied his friend. "But there is a plaguey little Mouse that is always trying to steal my dinner from my begging-dish."

Vinakarna looked up at the shelf and said, "How can a Mouse jump as high as this? No ordinary Mouse could jump so high. There must be some good reason why this Mouse is so strong and active, though there would not seem to be any."

Presently, after silent meditation, Vinakarna continued:

"I think I understand. This is a very fat and prosperous Mouse; he must have hidden treasure. For everywhere in the world it is the prosperous and wealthy who are strong and rule others like kings. Let us seek and see if we cannot find this Mouse's treasure."

The two friends procured a spade, found the mouse-hole and dug open Golden-Skin's secret hiding place, until they found his store of provisions, which they took away. After that, Golden-Skin being no longer able to eat regularly, but only when the beggar Priest was asleep, lost strength day by day, until he could no longer jump high enough to reach the shelf where the begging-dish stood. Before long he had scarcely energy enough to seek for his dinner at all, and crept about so miserably, looking for crumbs, that one day Chudakarna easily hit him over the head with his split bamboo cane.

(Hitopadeṣa. Book I. Fable 4. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE DEATH OF THE GREEDY JACKAL

ONCE in a town, called Happy Home, there lived a mighty Hunter, named Grim-Face. One day, wishing a little fresh venison for dinner, he took his bow and arrows and went into the

woods where he soon found and killed a Deer. As he was carrying the Deer home he came upon a wild Boar of huge size. Laying the Deer on the ground, he fixed and shot an arrow, wounding the Boar, which instantly rushed upon him with a roar louder than the roar of thunder, and ripped the Hunter open with his sharp tusks. The Hunter fell like a tree cut down by the axe, and lay dead between the Boar and a Snake, which had also been killed and crushed under their feet as they fought. Presently a Jackal, whose name was Howl-o'Nights, passed that way, prowling in search of food; and his eye fell upon the Hunter, the Deer, the Boar and the Snake, all lying dead together. "Aha!" said Howl-o'Nights, "what luck! Good fortune can come, I see, as well as ill fortune. Now let me think: the man will make fine pickings for a month; the Deer and the Boar, between them, will last me two months more; the Snake will do for to-morrow; and, as I am unusually hungry, I will treat myself now to this bit of strong-smelling bow-string."

So saying, the Jackal began to gnaw the sinew of which the bow-string was made. Presently, the string snapped apart, and the bow sprang back and pierced the heart of greedy Howl-o'Nights.

(Hitopadeśa. Book I. Fable 6. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE OLD JACKAL AND THE ELEPHANT

IN the Forest of Brahma there lived an Elephant whose name was White-Front. The Jackals all knew him, and said among themselves: "If that big brute would only die there would be four months' food, and plenty out of his carcass." At this, an old Jackal stood up and pledged himself to find some way to bring about the

death of the Elephant. Accordingly, he sought out White-Front and drawing near, greeted him reverentially:

"Your Holiness," he said, "Do me the honour of casting your eyes upon me."

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked the Elephant.

"I am only a Jackal," answered the other. "But the beasts of the forests have decided that it is not wise to live without a King. Accordingly, they have met in full council, and have sent me to inform your Majesty that they have chosen you as Lord of the Forest. We beg that your Majesty will at once come to the council as a sign that you consent to be our Lord."

So saying the Jackal led the way at a rapid pace, and was closely followed by White-Front, who was eager to begin his reign. Presently the Jackal brought him to a deep swamp, into which he plunged heavily before he could stop himself.

"Good Master Jackal," cried the Elephant, "What am I to do? I am up to my shoulders in this quagmire!"

"Perhaps," replied the Jackal with an impudent laugh, "your Majesty will condescend to take hold of the tip of my tail with your trunk, and let me pull you out!"

Then White-Front knew that he had been deceived. He sank deeper and deeper in the slime, and made many a meal for the Jackals. (*Hipopadea. Book I. Fable 8. Adapted from translation of Sir Edwin Arnold.*)

THE MONKEY AND THE WEDGE

IN South Behar there was an open plot of ground on which a temple was being built. One of the carpenters at work upon the temple had partly sawed a long beam of wood in two, and after wedging it open had gone away, leaving the Wedge sticking in the saw-cut.

Presently a large troop of Monkeys came frolicking through the trees, and upon reaching the clearing began to sport among the timbers of the half-finished temple. One of these Monkeys, unconscious of approaching fate, got astride of the half-sawed beam and grasping the Wedge, swung himself down into the cleft, so that his tail and legs dangled between the two halves of the beam. Not content with this, in the spirit of mischief natural to all Monkeys, he began to tug at the Wedge, until at last it yielded and slipped out, whereupon the wood closed in upon him and jammed him fast. So perished the Monkey, miserably crushed, the victim of his inquisitive meddling. (*Hitopadeśa. Book II. Fable I. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.*)

THE WASHERMAN'S JACKASS

THERE once lived in Benares a Washerman named Carpurapataka, who kept an Ass and a Dog in his courtyard, the former tethered, and the latter running at large. One day the Washerman, who had been lately married, was spending the morning in the company of his wife, when a thief entered the house and began to carry out his valuables. Seeing what the thief was doing, the Ass was much disturbed.

"Friend Dog," he said, "this is your business. Why do you not bark loudly and rouse our master?"

"Friend Ass," replied the Dog, "leave me to guard this place in my own way. I can do it quite well if I choose. But the truth is that our master has felt so safe lately that he quite forgets me, and I no longer get regularly fed. Masters are all like that. And a little scare will help to make him remember me."

"You wretched cur!" exclaimed the Ass, "what sort of a servant would stop for pay when there is work to be done?"

"You out-and-out Ass," returned the Dog, "what sort of a master would grudge the pay after the work is done?"

"You are a mean-spirited beast," retorted the Ass, "to neglect your duty. Well, I at least will do my best to warn him!"

So saying, the Ass put forth his very loudest braying. The Washerman, disturbed by the noise, hurried out, and missing the thief, who had taken flight, turned in a rage upon the Ass and beat it soundly with a cudgel.

(Hitopadeśa. Book II. Fable 2. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE CAT WHO SERVED THE LION

FAR away in the North, on a mountain called Thousand-Crags, there lived a Lion named Mighty-Heart. This Lion was much troubled by a little Mouse that ran out of its hole and nibbled the Lion's mane while he lay asleep in his den. The Lion would wake up very angry when he found that the ends of his magnificent mane were all ragged and torn; but the little Mouse had run back into its hole and he could never catch it. After much thinking the Lion went down to a village where he found a Cat named Curd-Eâr, which, with a great deal of trouble, and many promises, he persuaded to go back home with him. He fed the Cat like a Princess on all kinds of dainty food, while he himself slept peacefully without fear that his mane would be nibbled—for now the Mouse never dared to venture out of its hole. Whenever the Lion even heard the faint scratching of the Mouse in its hole, he always took that as a signal for giving the Cat an especially fine dinner. But one day, the unhappy Mouse, who was nearly starved, found courage to creep timidly out from his hole, when he was at once pounced upon by Curd-Eâr, and killed.

After that the Lion no longer heard the scratching of the Mouse and so quite forgot to give the Cat any more dinners.

(*Hitopadeśa*, Book II. Fable 3. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE TERRIBLE BELL

A THIEF had stolen a Bell from the city of Brahmaputra, and was making off with it into the mountains, when he was killed by a Tiger. The Bell lay in the jungle until some Monkeys picked it up and amused themselves by ringing it all the time. The townspeople found the bones of the man, and heard the sound of the Bell about the hills; so they gave out that there was a terrible devil in those hills, named Swing-Ear, whose ears rang like bells as he swung them about, and whose great pleasure was to eat up men. The people were so afraid of this devil that they were all leaving the town when an old peasant woman came to see the Rajah, or ruler of the town, and said to him:

"Your Highness, if you will pay me for it I can settle this devil Swing-Ear."

"Can you really?" exclaimed the Rajah.

"I think I can," repeated the woman.

"Then you shall be paid at once," said the Rajah.

The old peasant woman accepted the money, and set out for the hills, taking some fruit with her of the kind the Monkeys like. When she had reached the hills, she scattered the fruit up and down in the woods, and then hid herself and sat down to watch. Very soon the Monkeys found the fruit, and started to eat it, first putting down their Bell. The old woman softly stole up, seized the Bell, and took it back to town, where she was ever afterwards held in great honour.

(*Hitopadeśa*, Book II. Fable 4. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE BLACK SNAKE AND THE GOLDEN CHAIN

A PAIR of Crows had built their nest in the branches of a certain hollow tree. In the hollow lived a big black Snake, which had often climbed up the tree to the nest and eaten the baby Crows. One day, when there was a new nest full of little Crows, the mother bird said to her mate:

"Husband, we ought to have left this tree; we shall never raise any little ones so long as the black Snake lives here!"

"My dear," replied the father Crow, "you need not be afraid, I have put up with that wicked black Snake until I am tired. Now I am going to put an end to him."

"But how can you put an end to a big black Snake like that?" asked the mother bird.

"My dear," replied her mate, "have no fear, but help me with the plan that I have made. The King's son comes here every day to bathe in the stream. When he takes off his gold anklet and lays it on the stone, you must fly down, take it in your beak, and drop it into the hollow of the tree."

Shortly afterward the King's son came, as usual, to bathe. After he had taken off his clothes and ornaments, the Hen-Crow flew down, as her mate had told her, seized the anklet in her beak, and dropped it into the hollow of the tree. Presently, when the King's son came out of the water, he missed his golden anklet, and his servants began hunting for it everywhere. When they searched in the hollow of the tree they found not only the golden anklet, but also the big black Snake, which they immediately killed.

(*Huopadeça*. Book II. Fable 7. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE LION AND THE OLD HARE

IN the Mandara mountain there once lived a Lion named Fierce-Heart, who was continually killing and devouring the other wild animals. Matters at last became so bad that all the beasts of field and woods held a public meeting, and drew up a respectful remonstrance to the Lion in these words:

"Wherefore should your majesty thus make carnage of us all? If it please you, we ourselves will every day furnish one animal for your majesty's dinner."

The Lion replied: "If such an arrangement suits you better, all right. I am satisfied." So from that time on one beast was daily allotted to the Lion and daily devoured by him. At last came the day when it was the turn of an old Hare to supply the royal dinner. This old Hare, as he went on his way to give himself up, reflected as follows:

"At the worst I can but die, so I may as well take my own time in going to my death."

Now it happened that Fierce-Heart, the Lion, was unusually hungry; and seeing the Hare approaching quite slowly, he roared out angrily, "How dare you keep me waiting like this?"

"Sire," answered the old Hare, "the blame is not mine. I was delayed on the road by another Lion who made me swear that I would come back and give myself up to him, as soon as I had explained to your majesty."

"Come!" cried Fierce-Heart, in a mighty rage, "show me instantly where this insolent villain of a Lion lives!"

Accordingly, the Hare led the way until he came to a very deep

well, whereat he stopped and said: "Let my Lord, the King, come hither and behold his rival."

The Lion approached, and looking down into the well beheld his own image reflected in the water. Whereupon, with an angry roar, he flung himself into the well, and perished.

(Hitopadeṣa. Book II. Fable 8. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE WEAVER BIRDS AND THE MONKEYS

NEAR the bank of the Nerbudda River there stood a wide branching Silk-cotton-tree in which a large colony of Weaver Birds had built their hanging nests, and lived snugly in them, no matter how bad the weather. It was the rainy season, and the heavens were overspread with heavy clouds like sheets of blue-black indigo, and there was a steady and tremendous down-pour of water. The birds looked out from their nests and saw some Monkeys shivering and half-dead with the cold, standing under the tree.

"Twit-twit! Twit-twit!" they began to chirp. "Listen to us, you Monkeys. We birds build warm, cosy nests with no help but our beaks. Why can't you do as much, with your nimble hands and feet, instead of sitting in the drenching rain?"

On hearing this the Monkeys were quite angry.

"O-ho!" they said. "The birds in their snug nests are making fun of us, but just wait until the rain is over!"

Accordingly, as soon as the weather had cleared the Monkeys climbed the Silk-cotton-tree and broke all the Weaver Birds' eggs and destroyed their nests.

(Hitopadeṣa. Book III. Fable 1. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE ASS IN A TIGER'S SKIN

IN the city of Hastinapura there once dwelt a Washerman named Vilasa. This Washerman had a Jackass which had grown so weak from carrying too heavy loads, that he looked as though he would soon die. His master covered the sick animal with a Tiger's skin, and turned him loose in a corn field, which lay along the edge of a jungle. The owners of the field, from time to time, caught a glimpse of the Ass from a distance; but thinking that he was a Tiger which had wandered out of the jungle, they ran away. But one day, the watchman who guarded the field disguised himself with a covering of grey cloth; and armed with a bow and arrow, crept into one end of the field on his hands and knees. The Ass, now once more fat and lively from the strength given him by daily feeding upon the corn, said to himself:

"That grey thing over there looks to me like one of my own kind, perhaps a young female Ass. I will go over and get acquainted." Hereupon, he galloped eagerly toward the watchman, lifting up his voice as he went. The braying told the watchman that, instead of a Tiger, this was nothing but a Jackass, and in his disgust at having had his trouble for nothing, he drew his bow and shot him through the heart.

(Hitopadeśa. Book III. Fable 2. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE DYED JACKAL

ONCE upon a time a Jackal was prowling about the outskirts of a town, when he slipped and fell into a tank of blue dye. Finding that he could not get out, he lay down in the tank and pre-

tended to be dead. Pretty soon the dyer came back, and finding what looked like a dead Jackal, carried him into the woods and there threw him away. Left to himself, the Jackal found that his natural colour had been changed to a splendid blue.

"Really," he said to himself, "I am now of the most magnificent colour. Why should I not use it to my own advantage?" With this idea in mind, he called the other Jackals together and thus addressed them:

"Good people, the Goddess of the Wood, with her own divine hand, and with all the magic herbs of the forest, has annointed me your new King. Behold the colour of royalty! From now on you may do nothing without my Kingly permission."

The Jackals, dazzled by the royal colour, could do nothing else than kneel at his feet and promise obedience. Thus began the reign of the Blue Jackal, which presently extended to the Lions and the Tigers. When attended by such high-born subjects as these, he allowed himself to despise the Jackals, and kept them at a distance as though he were ashamed of them. This made the Jackals very angry. But one of them, who was a wise old beast, comforted them as follows:

"Leave the impudent fellow to me, for I have a plan to ruin him. These Lions and Tigers think he is a King because he has been dyed blue. What we must do is to show him to them in his true colours. When the evening-time comes we must all close about him and set up a great cry together. When he hears us he is sure to join in just as he used to do. And when he joins in the Tigers will know that he is nothing but a Jackal, and will fall upon him and destroy him."

Everything happened just as their wise old counsellor had fore-

told; and the Dyed Jackal met the fate deserved by those who desert their own party.

(Hitopadeśa. Book III. Fable 7. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE HERONS AND THE MONGOOSE

NEAR a mountain named Eagle-Cliff, there once grew a fig tree in which a flock of Herons had their nests. In a hollow at the foot of the tree there lived a Serpent, who was all the time eating up the baby Herons. Loud were the cries of the father and mother birds, until one day an old Heron gave them his advice:

"You must bring some fishes from the pool and lay them, one by one, in a line from the hole over yonder where a Mongoose lives, down to the hollow where the Serpent has his home. When the Mongoose comes to get the fishes he will find the Serpent, and when he finds the Serpent he will kill him."

The advice seemed good, so the Herons flew down to the pool and quickly brought many fishes which they laid in a long line all the way from the hole of the Mongoose down to the hollow where the Serpent lived. Pretty soon the Mongoose came to get the fishes, and at last he found the Serpent. But while he was killing it the Mongoose heard the cries of the young Herons. So after that he climbed up the tree, day after day, until he had eaten up all the young Herons that the Snake had left.

(Hitopadeśa. Book IV. Fable 4. Adapted from translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE HERMIT AND THE MOUSE

IN the forest of the Sage Gautama there once dwelt a Hermit, named Mighty-at-Prayer. Once as he sat at his frugal meal, a young Mouse, dropped from the beak of a Crow, fell beside him.

The Hermit took up the Mouse tenderly and fed it with rice grains. Some time later the Hermit saw a Cat chasing his new little friend, intending to devour it; whereupon, using his saintly power, he changed the Mouse itself into a large, vigorous cat. The Cat, however, soon found itself a good deal troubled by Dogs, whereupon, the Saint again changed it, this time into a Dog. As they dwelt in the forest the Dog was always in danger from prowling Tigers; accordingly, his protector once more changed him, into a Tiger—all the time thinking of him and treating him as nothing more or less than a Mouse. Even the country folk as they passed by would say: "That a Tiger? Not he! He is nothing but a Mouse that the Saint has transformed." The Mouse hearing this, constantly, became angry and said to himself, "So long as my master lives this shameful story of my origin will be remembered."

With this thought in mind he was about to take the Saint's life, when the latter, who had the power of reading people's thoughts, turned the ungrateful beast back into his original shape.

(Hitopadeśa. Book IV. Fable 5. Adapted from the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE CRANE AND THE CRAB

ONCE upon a time there lived in a pool called Lily-Water, an old Crane. As he stood one day in the shallows, with a most discouraged look, and a drooping bill, a Crab noticed him and called out:

"Friend Crane! Have you given up eating, that you stand there all day?"

"No, friend Crab," replied the old Crane, "I love my dinner of

fish as well as ever. But I have heard the fishermen saying that they are going to catch every fish that swims in these waters—so what I am to live on, I am sure I don't know. I must make up my mind to die."

All the fishes heard what the Crane said, and they said to one another, "This is a matter in which we are as much interested as the Crane. We had better ask his advice." Accordingly, they went to him and said:

"Good Crane, what can be done to save us?"

"There is only one way to save yourselves," replied the Crane, "and that is to go away. I will carry you, one by one, to another pool, if you want me to."

"Oh, please do, good Crane," said the trembling fishes.

The Crane, accordingly, carried them away, one by one, and after eating them came back each time and said that he had placed each fish safely in the other pool. Last of all, the Crab asked him to carry her; and the Crane, thinking how good the Crab's tender flesh would taste, took her up with great apparent respect. But when they reached the spot to which the Crane had carried the fishes, the Crab saw that the ground was covered with fish bones, and knew what fate was in store for her. So twisting around she fastened her claws upon the throat of the Crane, and tore it so that he quickly perished. (*Hitopadeśa. Book IV. Fable 6. Adapted from the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.*)

THE BRAHMAN AND THE PANS

ONCE upon a time in the city of Varna, there lived a Brahman whose name was Deva Sarman. At the Equinoctial Feast of the Dussara he received the gift of a dish of flour, which he took

with him to a Potter's shed; and there he lay down in the shade, staff in hand, among the pots. As he thus reclined, he began to meditate after the following fashion:

"I can sell this flour for at least ten Cowrie-shells, and with them I can purchase some of these pots and sell them at a profit. With all that money I can buy a stock of betel-nuts and body-cloths and make a new profit by selling them; and so I can go on buying and trading until I get a Lakh of Rupees—what's to prevent me? Then I shall marry four young wives—at least, one of them shall be both young and beautiful, and she shall be my favourite. Of course the other three will be jealous; but if they quarrel and talk too much and make themselves troublesome, I shall beat them like this—and this—and this—" And so saying, he flourished his staff with such vigour that he not only smashed his own meal-dish, but also broke several of the Potter's jars. The Potter, rushing in, caught him by the throat and threw him out of the shed, and so ended the Brahman's dreams of a Lakh of Rupees.

Who, e'er he makes a gain has spent it,
Like the Pot-breaker, will repent it.

(Hitopadeśa. Book IV. Fable 7. Adapted from the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE BRAHMAN AND THE THREE GOATS

A CERTAIN Brahman, or holy priest, who lived in the forest of Gautama, had gone to buy a goat for a sacrifice, and was returning home with it hanging across his shoulders when he was seen by three rogues.

"If we could only get that goat," said the three rogues to one

another, "it would be a fine trick!" So they made their plans and ran on ahead of the Brahman through the woods, and seated themselves at the foot of three different trees by the side of the road, that the Brahman was following.

Presently the Brahman came up with the first of the three rogues, who said to him: "Master, why are you carrying that dog on your shoulders?"

"Dog!" said the Brahman, "it is no dog, but a goat for sacrifice." And he continued on his way home. A mile or two further he came upon the second rogue, who called out, "Master, what are you doing with that dog that you carry on your shoulder?"

The Brahman laid the goat down on the ground, looked it all over, took it up again upon his shoulder and walked on with his mind in a whirl. Presently he came upon the third rogue who called out to him, "Master, why are you carrying that dog on your shoulder?"

On hearing this question for the third time the Brahman threw down the goat, washed himself clean in the river, and went home without his sacrifice. But the three rogues seized the goat, cooked it, and had a fine dinner.

Never believe a rogue, although you hate a lie,

Or, like the Brahman, you'll be sorry by-and-by.

(Hitopadeṣa. Book IV. Fable 9. Adapted from the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE CAMEL, THE LION AND HIS COURT

A CAMEL who had strayed from a Caravan, wandered into a forest in which there dwelt a Lion named Fierce-Fangs. Three of the Lion's Courtiers, the Tiger, the Jackal and the Crow, met the Camel and at once conducted him into the presence of their King.

The Camel, when questioned, was able to give a satisfactory account of himself, and the Lion took him into his royal service, under the name of Crop-Ear. Now it happened that the rainy season was very severe, and the Lion became too ill to go hunting. Consequently, there was much difficulty in obtaining sufficient food for the Court. Accordingly, the Courtiers agreed among themselves to persuade the Lion to kill the Camel. "For what interest have we," they asked, "in this Browser of thistles?"

"What indeed!" observed the Tiger. "But will the King kill him, think you, after giving his promise of protection?"

"When he finds himself starving, he will consent," said the Crow. "Know you not the saying:

Hunger hears not, cares not, spares not; no boon from the starving beg;

When the Snake is pinched with craving, verily she eats her egg."

Accordingly, they presented themselves before the Lion.

"Hast brought me food, fellow?" growled the King.

"None, may it please your Majesty," said the Crow.

"Must we starve then?" asked the Lion.

"Not unless you reject the food that is before you, Sire," rejoined the Crow.

"Before me? What do you mean?"

"I mean," replied the Crow (and hereupon he whispered softly in the Lion's ear), "Crop-Ear, the Camel!"

"Never!" said the Lion, and he stooped and touched the ground, and afterwards both his ears as he spoke, "I have given the Camel my pledge for safety, and how should I slay him?"

"Nay, Sire, I said not *slay*," replied the Crow. "But it may be

that he will *offer* himself for food. To that your Majesty would surely not object?"

"I am parlous hungry," murmured the King.

Thereupon the Crow departed to find the Camel; and having summoned all the Court into the presence of the King, under some pretence or other, he spoke as follows:

"Sire, all our efforts have come to nothing; we can find no food and see Thee, our Lord and Master, pining away. Take me, therefore, your Majesty, and break your fast upon me."

"Good Crow," said the Lion, "I had liefer die than do so."

"Will your Majesty deign to make a repast off of *me*?" asked the Jackal.

"Not on any account," replied the Lion.

"Condescend, my Lord," said the Tiger, "to appease your noble hunger with *my* poor flesh!"

"Impossible!" responded the Lion.

Thereupon, Crop-Ear, not to be behind in what seemed quite safe, made offer of his own carcase, and barely had time for regret, since his offer was accepted before he had finished speaking. The Tiger instantly sprang upon his flank, and all the rest promptly joined in the feast.

(*Hitopadeśa. Book IV. Fable 10. Adapted from the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.*)

THE FROGS AND THE OLD SERPENT

IN a deserted garden there once lived an old Serpent, named Slow-Coil. He was so very old that he could no longer catch mice or other animals for food. As he lay, one day, by the edge of a pond, a certain Frog saw him there and asked him:

"Are you so old, Serpent, that you no longer care to eat?"

"Leave me, kind sir," replied the subtle reptile; "The troubles of a poor wretch like me cannot interest your noble mind."

"Let me at least hear them," said the Frog somewhat flattered.

"You must know then, kind sir," began the Serpent, "that twenty years ago, in Brahmapootra, I bit the son of Kaundinya, a holy Brahman, from which cruel bite he died. Seeing his boy dead, Kaundinya, in his sorrow and despair cursed me with the curse that I should be a carrier of Frogs. So here I am, waiting to do as the Brahman's curse compels me."

The Frog, after hearing all this, went and told it to Web-Foot, the Frog King, who quickly came to take a ride on the Serpent. He was carried so carefully, and was so delighted with his ride, that after that he used the Serpent all the time. But one day, seeing that the Serpent moved very slowly, he asked what was the matter.

"Please, your Majesty," explained the Serpent, "your slave has nothing to eat."

"Eat a few of my Frogs," said the King, "I give you leave."

"I thank your Majesty," answered the Serpent, and at once he began to eat the Frogs. Before long he had emptied the pond of all the King's Frogs, and finished by eating the King himself.

(Hitopadeśa. Book IV. Fable 11. Adapted from the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold.)

THE SPARROW, THE WOODPECKER, THE FLY, THE FROG AND THE ELEPHANT

IN a certain forest there dwelt a pair of Sparrows whose nest was in a Tamala tree. One day an Elephant, made crazy by the heat of summer, came rushing through the forest, and seizing the branch on

which the Sparrows had their nest, tore it off, breaking all the eggs and nearly killing the father and mother birds. The mother Sparrow, mourning for her eggs, poured forth her lamentations, and refused to be comforted. Her friend the Woodpecker heard her sorrowful complaint, and pitying her, came to see what she could do to help her.

"If you are really my friend," said the Sparrow, "and wish to console me, you will help me to find some way to destroy this wicked Elephant, who has robbed me of my little ones."

"I have a friend," said the Woodpecker, "a fly named Bumble-Bumble. Let us go and ask him what we can do to destroy this wicked, cruel Elephant." So the Woodpecker and the Sparrow went to find the Fly. When they found him, the Woodpecker said:

"Dear Bumble-Bumble, my friend the Sparrow has been cruelly wronged by a wicked Elephant, who has destroyed her nest, and broken all her eggs. I want you to tell us how we shall kill this Elephant."

"I have a friend," said the Fly, "a Frog called Thunder-Throat. We will ask him to advise us what to do."

So they all three went to find Thunder-Throat, and told him the whole story.

"Not even an Elephant," said Thunder-Throat, "can protect himself against a number of justly angry enemies, if they act together. I have a plan which we must follow carefully. You, Bumble-Bumble, must go at mid-day and buzz so softly in the Elephant's ear that it will sound to him like the sweetest music, and he will close his eyes with pleasure. Then the Woodpecker must peck out the Elephant's eyes. When he is blind, and tormented with thirst, he will hear me and my brothers croaking loudly on the edge of a precipice. Thinking that

we are in a pond he will dash forward over the precipice, and be killed."

It was all done just as Thunder-Throat had planned. The Fly buzzed sweetly; the Elephant closed his eyes in pleasure; he was blinded by the Woodpecker; and as he dashed about, wild with pain and thirst, he followed the voice of the Frogs, fell over the precipice, and was dashed to pieces.

Moral. In union there is strength.

(Panchatantra. Vol. I. Chapter 16.)

THE MOUSE METAMORPHOSED INTO A GIRL

ONCE on the bank of the River Ganges, a certain Holy Man, named Yajnavalkya, was bathing and purifying himself, when a Mouse, escaping from the beak of a Falcon, dropped into the palm of his hand. When the Holy Man saw the Mouse, he placed it upon a fig leaf, bathed himself once more, and performed other acts of purification, and by the force of his austerity and holiness succeeded in changing the Mouse into a little Girl. Upon returning home, Yajnavalkya gave the little Girl to his Wife, who had no children of her own, and said to her:

"Dear Wife, take this little Girl and bring her up with tender care, as though she were in truth our own daughter." So the Girl was brought up lovingly and with watchful care, until she had reached a marriageable age. When Yajnavalkya's Wife saw that the Girl was old enough to marry, she said to her husband:

"Dear husband, do you not see that it is high time that our daughter was given in marriage?"

"That is well said," answered Yajnavalkya, "and I shall give her

to a husband worthy of her, and to none other. But it is the right of every young Girl to choose her own husband. If it is pleasing to her, I will call the venerable Sun, and give her to him in marriage."

"There can be no harm in that; do so by all means," answered the Wife.

So the Holy Man summoned the Sun by the help of mystic formulas; and the Sun at once appeared.

"Venerable Sir, why do you summon me?" he asked.

Yajnavalkya replied: "Here is my daughter. If she will choose you, it is my wish that you should marry her." Then turning to his daughter, he said: "My daughter, this is the venerable Sun, who lights the Three Worlds, will you choose him?"

"My father," replied the Girl, "The Sun is too ardent; I do not want him. Call some one else greater than he."

When the Holy Man heard these words of his daughter, he said to the Sun, "Venerable Sun, is there any other who is greater than thou?"

The Sun replied, "The Cloud is more powerful than I; for when covered by him, I become invisible."

Then Yajnavalkya summoned the Cloud, and said to his daughter:

"My child, I will give you in marriage to this one, if he pleases you."

"No," replied the Girl, "he is too black and cold, give me to some one greater than he."

Then the Holy Man said: "Oh, Cloud, is there any other superior to thee?"

The Cloud replied, "The Wind is superior to me. When beaten by the Wind, I scatter into a thousand pieces."

When Yajnavalkya heard this, he summoned the Wind, and said:

"My daughter, here is the Wind, who seems in all ways to be the proper husband for you."

"My father," she replied, "the Wind is too variable. Summon some one else more powerful than the Wind."

The Holy Man asked, "Oh, Wind, is there any one who is greater than thou?"

The Wind replied, "The Mountain is greater than I; for, strong as I am, the Mountain can stop and hold me back."

Then Yajnavalkya summoned the Mountain, and said: "My daughter, if the Mountain pleases you I will give you to him in marriage."

"Father," answered the Girl, "the Mountain is too harsh and rough. I pray you, give me to some one else."

The Holy Man said to the Mountain, "Oh, King of the Mountains, is there any one greater than thou?"

The Mountain replied, "The Rats are more powerful than I; for, by the force of their constant gnawing they pierce holes in me, and tear my body asunder."

Accordingly, Yajnavalkya summoned a Rat, showed him to his daughter, and said, "My daughter, I will give you to this King of the Rats; do you choose him as a husband?"

When the Girl saw the Rat she thought to herself, "Here at last is one of my own species;" and, trembling with joy, she said:

"Father, change me once again into a Mouse, and give me to the Rat, that I may perform the household duties ordained for one of my own species."

Accordingly, the Holy Man, by virtue of his great austerity and holiness, uttered the proper charms and incantations, changed the Girl once more into a Mouse, and gave her to the Rat in marriage.

(Panchatantra. Vol. III. Chapter 13.)

THE LION AND THE JACKAL

IN a certain part of a forest there lived a Lion named Pointed-Claws. One day this Lion roamed hither and thither, his stomach lean with hunger, without meeting a single animal. But at the hour of sunset he came upon a great cave in the mountains, and entered it, thinking to himself, "Surely some animal must possess this Cave, and will return to it at night. So I will hide myself and wait."

Presently, the possessor of the cave, who was a Jackal named Curd-Tail, returned home, and discovered the line of Lion's foot-prints leading into the Cave, but none coming out again. "Alas! I am a dead Jackal!" he said to himself. "There must surely be a Lion hidden in this Cave. What shall I do? How shall I find out whether a Lion is there or not?"

After a little reflection, the Jackal took his stand at the mouth of the Cave, and began to call out:

"Hello, Cave! Hello, Cave!"

Then after a brief silence he began again, "Say, Cave, have you forgotten our agreement that whenever I came home I was always to call out to you before entering, and that you were to answer? If you don't call back to me, off I go to another Cave, which will answer me."

When the Lion heard this he thought, "Evidently this Cave is in the habit of answering the Jackal when he comes home. But to-night it says nothing because of its fear of me. I will myself call to the Jackal, so that he will think that it is the Cave speaking, and will come in, and I shall have my dinner."

Thus thinking, the Lion called to the Jackal. The Cave was filled

with the echoes of his roaring, and sent terror to the hearts of all the forest animals far and wide. The Jackal fled in all haste, saying to himself:

"He who acts with circumspection is happy: he who acts without circumspection will regret it. I have grown old in the forest, but never yet have I seen or heard a talking Cave."

(Panchatantra. Vol. III. Chapter 15.)

THE MONKEY AND THE CROCODILE

IN a certain spot near the Sea grew a great Jambon Tree, always full of fruit. And in this tree dwelt a Monkey, called Red-Chin. One day a Crocodile, named Fierce-Jaws, came up out of the water, and seeing the Monkey in the Jambon Tree, fell to talking to him, and soon they became good friends. After this the Crocodile often came to spend the day with the Monkey, under the shadow of the Jambon Tree, and the hours passed happily in pleasant talk. When the Crocodile returned home, he always gave his Wife such part of the fruit of the Jambon Tree as was left from his luncheon. But one day the Crocodile's Wife asked:

"My Lord, where do you find this kind of fruit, which has the taste of ambrosia?"

"My dear," answered Fierce-Jaws, "I have a dear friend, a Monkey named Red-Chin, who gives me this fruit because of his affection for me."

Then said the Crocodile's Wife, "Whoever eats always of such fruit as this must have a heart of ambrosia. If you want to keep me for your wife, get me the Monkey's heart, so that I may eat it and thus preserve myself from old age and death."

"My dear," answered the Crocodile, "do not ask this of me, for the Monkey has become to me like a second brother."

Then the Crocodile's wife said: "Never before have you refused me anything! This Monkey you talk of must be some other Crocodile's Wife!—Or, if not, what is a Monkey to you? If you do not bring me his heart to eat, I will starve myself, and the blame of my death will rest on you!"

Much troubled, the Crocodile took his way back to the Monkey. The latter seeing him approaching so late and so sadly, called down to him:

"Friend Fierce-Jaw, why so late, and why so sad?"

"Friend Red-Chin," replied the Crocodile, "My Wife has been saying hard things to me. She says that I spend all my days with you, and never bring you back to our house. If I fail to bring you back to-day, she vows that she will never look upon me again."

"Friend Fierce-Jaw," said the Monkey, "your Wife is in the right. But I make my home in the forest and you make yours in the midst of the waters. How could I go there with you? Instead, bring your Wife here, so that I may receive her blessing."

"Friend Red-Chin," said the Crocodile, "our home is on a very agreeable island, even though it is in the midst of the Sea. Mount upon my back, and you shall journey thither pleasantly and without danger."

The Monkey replied, "Dear friend, if that is so let us hasten. I will at once mount upon your back."

Presently, the Monkey, riding upon the back of the Crocodile, found himself surrounded by bottomless water, and his heart was filled with fear. "Brother," he said, "go carefully, carefully, for my body is washed by the waves."

When the Crocodile heard this he said to himself, "Now that we have reached deep water the Monkey is in my power; seated upon my back, he cannot escape me by the width of a single sesame seed. I will tell him my true purpose, so that he may have a chance to call upon his Gods for help." Thereupon he said to the Monkey:

"Friend Red-Chin, I want to tell you that I have taken advantage of your confidence to bring you out here, in order to kill you by my Wife's commands. Call upon your patron Saints to save you."

"Brother," said the Monkey, "what harm have I done to your Wife or to you, that you should wish to kill me?"

"You have done nothing," replied the Crocodile, "but my Wife wants to eat your heart, because it is steeped in the juice of the ambrosial fruits on which you feed. That is the sole reason for what I have done."

Hearing this the Monkey, who was quick-witted, rejoined:

"My dear friend, why did you not tell me this before we started? I always keep my heart hidden in the hollow of the Jambon Tree. Of course I will give it to your Wife, but what a pity you brought me away without it."

When the Crocodile heard this he cried out joyfully:

"My dear fellow, I will take you back at once to the Jambon Tree and you can give me your heart to take to my Wife and keep her from starving herself."

The Monkey, who had said at least a hundred silent prayers, did not wait until they reached dry land, but took a long flying leap to shore. Then swinging himself up to safety in the tree, he congratulated himself that he was still alive.

"Hurry up," called out the Crocodile, "and give me your heart for my Wife to eat."

"Shame on you, false friend!" replied the Monkey. "Is there any one in the world with two hearts? Take yourself off and never come back! For anybody who is fool enough to make friends with a traitor is deserving of death."

(Panchatantra. Vol. IV. Chapter 1.)

THE FROG AND THE SERPENT

IN a certain Well there once dwelt a King of Frogs, named Gangadatta. One day, being much harassed by his Heirs, he climbed into the bucket and by help of the wheel ascended little by little from the Well. And all the while he was thinking, "How shall I punish these troublesome Heirs of mine?" While he was still meditating, he saw a Black Serpent, named Priyadarsana, just entering his hole. No sooner did Gangadatta see the Serpent than he thought, "If I take this Black Serpent back to my Well, I shall be able to destroy all my Heirs."

So thinking, Gangadatta went to the mouth of the hole and called to the Serpent, "Come here, Priyadarsana, come here!" When the Serpent heard himself called, he said to himself, "Whoever calls me is certainly not one of my species, for this is not the voice of a Serpent. I have no ties of friendship with any other creature in the world. So I am going to stick close to my stronghold, until I see who it can be that is calling me."

Accordingly the Serpent called out, from deep within the hole, "Hello! Who is there?"

The Frog replied, "I am King of the Frogs, named Gangadatta, and I have come to form a friendship with you."

When the Serpent heard this, he said, "How am I to believe that? For when does Grass make friends with Fire?"

"I know that it seems impossible," answered Gangadatta, "for you are our natural enemy. But I have come to you for help, because my Heirs make my life a burden to me."

"Where do you live?" asked the Serpent. "Is it in a pond, a lake, a swamp or a well? Show me your home."

The Frog replied, "I live in a deep well, walled all around with stones."

"I am a reptile," said the Serpent, "and dwell in the soft earth. Consequently, I could not enter through the stone walls of your Well. Or if I did enter it, there is no place where I could hide and lie in wait, to kill your Heirs. So you may as well go your way alone."

"Not so," said Gangadatta. "Come with me. For I will show you an easy way into the well. Half-way down, near the water level, is a convenient hole, where you may lie in wait and amuse yourself by killing my Heirs."

When the Serpent heard this, he thought to himself, "I am already approaching old age. Sometimes by hook or by crook, I catch a Rat; and sometimes I don't catch him. So the prospect of a good living held out to me by this Destroyer of his own Family fills me with joy. So I shall go home with him and feast upon Frogs." Thus thinking, Priyadarsana said to the King of the Frogs, "I have decided to go with you, Gangadatta; let us get started at once."

"So be it, Priyadarsana," answered Gangadatta. "I will take you by an easy way and show you the hole in the well. But first you must promise me that you will spare my own faithful Followers. You are to eat only those Frogs that I point out to you."

"My dear fellow," said the Serpent, "from now on you are my

friend. Consequently you have nothing to fear. I will eat your Heirs according to your orders." So speaking, he glided from his hole, embraced Gangadatta, and set off in his company.

When they arrived beside the well, Gangadatta himself took the Serpent down into his home by aid of the wheel and bucket. Then, when his new friend was safely hidden in the hole, Gangadatta pointed out his Heirs; and day by day Priyadarsana ate them, until he had eaten every one. But when there were no more Heirs left, the Serpent said:

"My dear friend, no more of your enemies are left, and I am still hungry. Give me, therefore, some other food, since you brought me here."

Gangadatta replied, "You have acted like a true friend. But now, I pray you, go your way, by means of the wheel and bucket."

"Listen, Gangadatta," said the Serpent, "what you say is not kind. How can I go back? The hole which was once my fortress is no doubt long since occupied by another. Evidently I must remain here, and you must give me, one at a time, the Frogs that are your companions and followers. Otherwise, I shall eat them all at once."

When Gangadatta heard this his heart was troubled, and he said to himself, "I have done a terrible thing by bringing the Serpent here."

Accordingly, Gangadatta continued to feed the Serpent with one Frog at a time; and the Serpent, after eating his one Frog, often ate a second one secretly when Gangadatta was absent. Consequently, in the course of time, the whole company of Frogs was devoured, and there remained only Gangadatta himself. Then Priyadarsana said to him:

"My dear Gangadatta I am still hungry. All the other Frogs are destroyed down to the last one. You alone remain. Give me, I pray you, something to eat, since it was you who brought me here."

"My friend," said Gangadatta, "so long as I live you shall have no cause for anxiety. At your bidding I will go forth and will win the confidence of Frogs in other wells, and bring them back with me."

"Until now," replied the Serpent, "I have felt that I must not eat you, for you have been like a brother to me. Do this one thing more, and henceforth you will be like my own father. By all means, Gangadatta, do as you suggest."

At the Serpent's bidding Gangadatta hopped briskly into the bucket, and ascended from the Well. For many days Priyadarsana eagerly watched for his return. But when a long time had passed, and Gangadatta had not come back, the Serpent said to an Iguana who lived in a nearby hole: "Dear friend, do me a little service. Since you have known Gangadatta for a long time, go and find him in whatever pond he is now living, and say to him from me, 'Come back, Gangadatta, even if you come alone, even if the other Frogs won't come with you. I cannot live here longer without you; and if I have ever done you an unkindness, I dedicate my life to atoning for it.'"

Accordingly, the Iguana quickly sought out Gangadatta and said to him, "My dear Gangadatta, your friend, Priyadarsana is ceaselessly watching the Road of your Return. Come back, he begs, at once, and in return for any ill that he may have done you he pledges the good offices of his remaining years. Return with your heart free of fear."

When Gangadatta heard this he said, "What wickedness will not

hunger commit? Men, lean with want, are without pity. Dear friend, say to Priyadarsana that Gangadatta will not return to the Well."

(Panchatantra. Vol. IV. Chapter 2.)

THE LIONESS, THE WHELPS AND THE LITTLE JACKAL

IN a certain part of a forest there dwelt a pair of Lions. One day the Lioness had two Whelps. After this the Lion spent all his time hunting other animals and bringing them to the Lioness for food. But a day came on which he caught nothing. While he was still roaming hither and thither through the forest, the sun set. On his way home, empty-handed, he found and caught a little Jackal. Seeing how very young it was, he did not kill it, but took it carefully between his teeth and brought it home alive to his mate. When he arrived home the Lioness said, "Dear Husband, have you brought us something to eat?"

"My dear," replied the Lion, "excepting for this little Jackal, I have not found a single animal all day, and considering how young it is, I could not bear to kill it, especially as it is one of our near relations. However, eat him yourself, for you need the food. Tomorrow I may have better luck."

"My dear," said the Lioness, "you remembered how young the Jackal is and would not eat him, how do you expect me to kill him to satisfy my own appetite? I cannot do that; instead, I shall adopt him as my third son." Thus saying, she adopted the little Jackal, and nursed him along with her own two Whelps. Thus the three little animals, mutually ignorant of the difference of their breed,

passed the days of their infancy in the same manner of life and the same sports and plays. But one day a wild Elephant passed that way, roaming here and there in the forest. Upon seeing this Elephant the two young Lions bristled with anger and prepared to attack him. But the little Jackal said, "Be careful, that is an Elephant, an enemy of our race! We must not attempt to stand and face him."

So speaking, the Jackal turned and fled back to his home; and the two little Lions were disheartened at seeing the fright of their older brother. But when they also had returned home, they told the parent Lions with much laughter how frightened their older brother had been and how, upon seeing an Elephant from far off, he had promptly fled. When the little Jackal heard them laughing, he was seized with great anger; his lower lip trembled, his eyes grew red, he frowned fiercely and threatened the two Whelps with insulting words. Hereupon the Lioness led him aside and rebuked him. "My child, you must never speak like that, remember that they are your little brothers." But the Jackal was still very angry, and asked, "Am I inferior to them in courage, in beauty, in diligence, or in cleverness, that they should dare to mock me? It is evident that I shall have to kill them!"

Upon hearing this the Lioness, who was really fond of the little Jackal, and wanted him to live, laughed softly, and replied:

"You are brave and wise and handsome according to your own kind, my son. But the breed from which you sprang does not kill Elephants. Listen, my child, you are really the son of a Jackal. I nourished you out of compassion together with my own two Whelps. Therefore, while my two sons are still too young to know that you are a Jackal, go away quickly and stay with your own species. Otherwise they will kill you, and you will travel upon the Road of Death."

When the Jackal heard this his heart was overcome with fear. He stole away very softly and went to live henceforth with his own species.

(Panchatantra. Vol. IV. Chapter 5.)

THE TWO FISHES AND THE FROG

IN a certain Pond there once dwelt two Fishes named respectively, Satabuddhi, or Hundred-Wits, and Sahasrabuddhi, or Thousand-Wits. These two Fishes formed a close friendship with a Frog named Ekabuddhi, or Single-Wit; and they formed a habit of meeting on the shore of the Pond for pleasant talks and discussions, after which the two Fishes would return to the water. One day, when the three had thus come together to converse, some Fishermen, with fishing nets in hand, passed by and stopped for a moment just at sunset. When the Fishermen saw the Pond they said to one another:

"This Pond seems well stocked with fish, and there is very little water in it. Let us come back again to-morrow." Having thus spoken they continued on their way toward home.

When the three friends heard this speech, which came upon them like a thunder-clap, they held council together. The Frog said, "Listen, dear Hundred-Wits and Thousand-Wits! What is best for us to do? Shall we run away or shall we stay?"

Upon hearing this, Thousand-Wits laughed, and said, "Dear Single-Wit! Do not let yourself be frightened at overhearing a few chance words! It is not likely that the Fishermen will ever come back at all. But if they do come, then thanks to my many wits, I will save you and myself too, for I know all of the water-ways in the depths of the Pond."

When Hundred-Wits heard this, he said, "Ah! What Thousand Wits says is quite true. There is much reason in the old saying that where there is no road for wind or sunshine, there quick wit will easily find a path. So it would be foolish to leave our place of birth just because we overheard a few idle words. There is no need of seeking a new home. I also will protect you, friend Single-Wit, by the strength of my intelligence."

"My dear friends," answered the Frog, "I have only a single wit, as you know, and it advises me to flee. So I shall set out this very night with my wife for another Pond."

Accordingly, as soon as night had come the Frog set out as he had said, in search of his new home.

The next day the Fishermen came early in the morning like Messengers of Fate, and covered the Pond with nets. All swimming creatures in the Pond, the Fish, the Turtles, the Frogs and Crabs and other animals were caught and dragged out. Hundred-Wits and Thousand-Wits fled hither and thither with their wives and families, and for some time they escaped capture, thanks to their knowledge of the many water-ways. But at last they too fell into the net and were killed. In the afternoon the contented Fishermen started back towards their homes. One of them carried Hundred-Wits upon his head, because he was heavy; another carried Thousand-Wits by a rope thrust through his gills. As they passed along the road, the Frog, Single-Wit, who had come up on the shore of his new Pond, said to his wife, "Look, look, my dear! There is Hundred-Wits carried on the head of the Fisherman, and there is Thousand-Wits hanging by a rope; but I, Single-Wit, can still sport at my pleasure in the crystal-clear water."

THE BIRD WITH TWO BEAKS

IN a certain spot by the seashore there once dwelt a Bird named Bharanda, which had only a single stomach, but two Beaks. As he wandered along the margin of the sea he found a fruit of ambrosial flavour which the waves had tossed upon the shore. Eating it he said, "Ah! I have eaten many fruits of ambrosial sweetness which the waves of the sea have flung up; but truly the taste of this fruit surpasses them all. May it not be the fruit of the yellow sandal-wood of Paradise, or some other celestial fruit fallen by chance into the ocean? Assuredly it has given me a rare and wonderful pleasure of the tongue."

As he spoke thus, the second Beak said: "If it is so good as all that, give me a share of your ambrosial fruit, that I too may experience a rare pleasure of the tongue!"

At this, the first Beak laughed and said, "We have only one stomach between us, and whichever eats, the hunger of both will be appeased. Accordingly, why eat separately? Let us rather save what is left and give pleasure to our dear mate, Bharandi, who is waiting at home?"

So saying, the first Beak carried home what was left of the fruit and gave it to Bharandi to eat. And when she had tasted it she was filled with joy, and gave payment with many thanks and caresses.

From that day forth the other Beak became morose and full of resentment. At last, it chanced one day, upon the fruit of a certain poisonous tree. The resentful Beak had no sooner recognized the

nature of this fruit than it said to the other Beak, "Miserable, treacherous creature! I have found without seeking it the fruit of a poisonous tree. I am going to eat it in order to punish your selfishness!"

The first Beak replied, "You poor fool! Don't do that, for if you do we shall both perish. Forgive my selfishness and I promise I will never be unfair to you again." But even while he still spoke the other Beak ate the poisonous fruit, and soon afterwards both Beaks were dead.

(Panchatantra. Vol. V. Chapter 14.)

THE BRAHMAN SAVED BY A CRAB

IN a certain spot there once dwelt a Brahman named Brahmadatta, who was about to set forth for another village on some important business. His mother said to him:

"My son, why go on this long journey alone? Find some friend, I beg of you, to take as a companion on your way."

"Mother," replied the Brahman, "have no fear; the road is not dangerous. Besides, my business is so important that I must start to-day, even though I go alone."

When the Brahman's mother saw that he had made up his mind, she procured a Crab from a nearby pond and said to her son:

"My dear son, if you absolutely must go to-day this Crab will serve as a companion. Take good care of it, and go your way."

Out of respect for his mother the Brahman took the Crab, placed it in a parcel of camphor, dropped the parcel into the bag with his money, and set off in haste. But presently, as he walked on and on, he began to suffer from the heat. Coming to a tree by the wayside he stretched himself comfortably in its shade and fell asleep. Pres-

ently a black Snake glided from its hole in the tree and rapidly approached the Brahman. But as it drew near, its senses were overcome by the fumes of the camphor. Forgetful of the Brahman, it flung itself upon his purse, and crazed with eagerness swallowed the whole package of camphor. The Crab, which the Serpent gobbled down with the rest of the package, stuck fast in his throat and killed him. When the Brahman awoke and looked about him, there by the roadside lay the dead black Serpent which had torn open his purse and eaten his packet of camphor. And near the Serpent sat the Crab the Brahman's mother had given him. When the Brahman saw these things he said to himself, "Ah, my mother spoke truly when she said that one should take a travelling companion, and never travel long distances alone. And because I followed her advice in a spirit of obedience and faith I was saved, even by a Crab, from the death which the black Serpent would have inflicted."

(Panchatantra. Vol. V. Chapter 15.)

THE STORY OF THE MOUSE MERCHANT

MANY a man, starting with a modest capital, has ended by acquiring great wealth. But I built up my large fortune by starting with nothing at all. Listen, and you shall hear how I did it.

My father died before I was born; and my mother's wicked relations robbed her of all she possessed. So in fear of her life she fled from them and took refuge at the home of one of my father's friends. There I was born, to become later the protector and mainstay of my excellent mother. Meanwhile she supported our lives by the pittance earned through hardest drudgery; and, poor as we were, she found a teacher who consented to instruct me in the simple rudiments of

reading, writing and keeping accounts. Then one day my mother said to me, "My son, your father before you was a merchant, and the time has come for you also to engage in trade. The richest merchant now living in our city is the money changer, Visakhila, and I hear that it is his habit to make loans to the poor sons of good families to start them in business. Go to him and ask him for such a loan."

Straightway I went to Visakhila, the money changer, and found him angrily denouncing another merchant's son, to whom he had loaned money: "See that dead Mouse upon the ground," he said scornfully, "a clever man could start with even such poor capital as that and make a fortune. But, however much money I loan you I barely get back the interest on it, and I greatly doubt whether you have not already lost the principal."

Hereupon I impetuously turned to Visakhila and said, "I will accept the dead Mouse as capital to start me in business!"

With these words, I picked up the Mouse, wrote out a receipt, and went my way, leaving the money changer convulsed with laughter.

I sold the Mouse to another merchant as cat's meat, for two handfuls of peas. I ground the peas and taking with me a pitcher of water, I hastened from the city and seated myself under the shade of a spreading tree. Many weary wood-cutters passed by, carrying their wood to market, and to each one I politely offered a drink of cool water and a portion of the peas. Every wood-cutter gratefully gave me in payment a couple of sticks of wood; and at the end of the day I took these sticks and sold them in the market. Then for a small part of the price I received for the wood I bought a new supply of peas; and so on the second day I obtained more sticks from the wood-cutters. In the course of a few days I had amassed quite a little capital and was able to buy from the wood-cutters all the wood that

they could cut in three days. It happened soon afterwards that because of the heavy rains there was a great scarcity of wood in the market, and I was able to sell all that I had bought for several hundred *panas*. With this money I set up a shop, and as I am a shrewd business man I soon became wealthy.

Then I went to a goldsmith and had him make me a Mouse of solid gold. This Mouse I presented to Visakhila as payment of the loan; and he soon after gave me his daughter in marriage. Because of this story I am known to the world as Mushika, the Mouse. So it was that without any capital to build on, I amassed a fortune.

(Katha-Sariti-Sagara. Book I, Chapter 6; adapted from the German of F. Brockhaus.)

THE MERCHANT'S SON AND THE IRON SCALES

THERE was once a Merchant's Son who had spent all his father's wealth, and had nothing left except a pair of Iron Scales. Now these Scales were worth much, for they were made of a thousand *palas* of iron. So when the Merchant's Son decided to journey to a distant land he left the Scales for safe-keeping in the care of another merchant. When the young man returned from his long journey, he demanded back from the merchant the Scales he had deposited with him. The merchant answered, "I cannot give them back, they have been eaten by the Mice." And he repeated, "What I tell you is quite true; the iron of which the Scales were made was especially sweet iron, so the Mice ate it." This he said with an outward show of regret, while laughing in his heart. The young man made no reply, except to ask if he might have some food; and the other, being well pleased with himself, cordially gave him some. Having eaten,

the young man went down to the river to bathe, taking with him the little son of his friend the merchant, who was a mere child, and whom he persuaded to come with him by the gift of a dish of sweets. After he had bathed, the young man left the boy in charge of another friend, and then returned to the merchant's house. The merchant asked him, "Where is that little son of mine?" The young man replied, "A Kite swooped down from the air and carried him off." The merchant flew into a great rage and said, "You have kidnapped my son!" And he took the young man to the King's judgment hall. Here the owner of the Scales repeated his story of the Kite which swooped down from the sky and carried off the merchant's son. The officers of the court said, "This is impossible. How could a Kite carry off a boy?" The young man replied, "In a country where large Iron Scales can be eaten by Mice, a Kite might carry off an Elephant, to say nothing of a boy." When the officers of the court heard this, they were curious to hear the story of the Iron Scales; and when they had heard it they made the dishonest merchant return the Scales to their owner, while he on his part returned the merchant's son.

(Katha-Sarit-Sagara. Book X, Chapter 60.)

THE MONKEYS, THE FIREFLY AND THE BIRD

ONCE upon a time a troop of Monkeys were wandering through a wood. The weather was cold, and when in the twilight they came upon a Firefly they mistook it for the embers of a real fire. Accordingly, they placed dry grass and leaves around the Firefly, hoping to warm themselves; and one of the Monkeys fanned it with his breath, trying to kindle it into a blaze. A little Bird,

named Suchimukha, was perched above in a tree; and when he saw the Monkeys wasting their time and efforts, he called down to them, "That is not a real fire, it is only a Firefly. Do not waste your breath."

Although the Monkey heard what Suchimukha said, he paid no attention but continued to blow steadily. So the Bird flew down from the tree, and once more began to advise and argue with the Monkey. Presently the latter became angry and picking up a stone flung it at Suchimukha and killed him.

It is foolish to waste good advice on those who do not choose to listen.

(Katha-Sarit-Sagara. Book X, Chapter 60.)

THE SERVANT WHO LOOKED AFTER A DOOR

A CERTAIN merchant said one day to his Servant, "I am obliged to go home for a short time. Take good care of the Door of my shop until I come back."

Having said this the merchant went his way, and the Servant, removing the shop Door placed it on his shoulder and went off to see some actors who were performing nearby. Later, as the Servant was returning, his master met him and scolded him roundly. But the Servant answered, "What have I done amiss? I have taken the best of care of this shop Door, just as you told me to."

It is folly to heed only the words of an order, without trying to understand its meaning.

(Katha-Sarit-Sagara. Book X, Chapter 62.)

THE SERVANTS WHO KEPT THE RAIN OFF THE TRUNKS

IN the course of a long journey the Camel of a certain merchant fell by the wayside exhausted by its heavy load. The merchant said to his Servants, "I must go and buy another Camel to carry half of this Camel's load. While I'm gone you must remain here, and if the sky clouds over you must be very careful that no rain touches the leather of these Trunks, for they are filled with costly clothing."

Having given these orders, the merchant went off, leaving the Servants watching beside the Camel. Suddenly a storm-cloud came up and a heavy Rain descended. Hereupon the foolish Servants said to one another, "Our master told us to take good care that no Rain should touch the leather of these Trunks." Accordingly they took counsel together, and being unable to think of a better way of protecting the leather, they dragged the clothing out of the Trunks and wrapped it around them. The result was that all the clothing was ruined by the Rain. When the merchant returned he flew into a great rage and said to his Servants, "You idiots! See the harm you have done! Why, my whole stock of clothes is spoiled by the Rain!"

The Servants answered, "What fault have we committed? You told us to keep the Rain off the leather of the Trunk."

The master said, "I told you that if the leather got wet, the clothes would be spoiled. I told you this, in order to save the clothes and not the leather."

Then the master placed the load on another Camel, and when they

reached home he took from his Servants' wages the whole price of the clothes.

Those who lack understanding ruin their own interests as well as those of others.

(Katha-Sarit-Sagara. Book X, Chapter 62.)

THE SNAKE WITH TWO HEADS

A CERTAIN Snake had two Heads, one in the usual place and the other at the tip of his tail. But while the Head that he had in the usual place was provided with a pair of good eyes, the Head at the end of his tail was blind. Now there was a constant quarrel between these two Heads, for each of them claimed to be the more powerful Head, and to have mastery over the other. Now, it was the custom of the Snake as he roamed around, to go with his real Head foremost. But on one occasion the Head at the end of the Snake's tail seized hold of a wooden stake with its jaws, and by holding on firmly prevented the Snake from going further. This convinced the Snake that the Head in his tail must be more powerful than the other Head, since it had got the best of the struggle. Accordingly, from this time on, the Snake roamed about with his blind Head foremost; and so presently he fell into a pit full of burning rubbish, being unable to see where he was going, and was thus burned to death.

(Katha-Sarit-Sagara. Book X, Chapter 63.)

THE BRAHMAN AND THE MONGOOSE

THERE was once a Brahman named Devasarman, who lived with his wife in a certain village. In the course of time a son was born to them, and the Brahman, though very poor, felt that he had

in this son a treasure of great price. One day the Brahman's wife went down to the river to bathe, while Devasarman remained in the house, taking care of the child. Presently a messenger came from the King's palace to summon the Brahman, whose sole means of support depended upon the fees paid him for his priestly services. Pleased at the prospect of a fee, Devasarman hurried off to the palace, leaving a Mongoose, which he himself had brought up from birth, to stand guard over the child. After he had gone a Snake suddenly appeared and crawled directly towards the spot where the infant lay; but the Mongoose, upon seeing the Snake, instantly sprang upon it and killed it out of devotion to his master. When the Mongoose saw Devasarman returning, while he was still far off, it ran joyously out to meet him, with its jaws still red with the blood of the Snake. When Devasarman beheld the Mongoose in this condition, he was seized with a terrible fear that it had killed his little son, and in his excitement and anger he struck the Mongoose a fatal blow with a stone. But when he entered the house, and saw the Snake lying dead on the floor, and the child alone, but alive and well, he repented bitterly of what he had done. And when his wife returned and was told what had happened, she reproached him for his rash haste, saying: "Why did you so inconsiderately kill the Mongoose when it had done you nothing but kindness?"

(Katha-Sarit-Sagara. Book X, Chapter 64.)

THE DISCONTENTED OX

THERE were once two Oxen who were brothers and were owned by one master, for whom they did all the heavy draught-work. Now one of these Oxen was much smaller than his brother; and since

they were both the same colour, they were known respectively by the names of Big Redcoat and Little Redcoat. Now it happened that the master's daughter was soon to be married; accordingly he began fattening a certain Pig, named Munika, for the wedding feast. When Little Redcoat saw the abundant food that was given to Munika, he complained to his brother: "All the loads for this household have been drawn by you and me, my Brother; but all that they give us in payment is sorry grass and straw to eat, yet here is this Pig, Munika, being fed on rice! Why should he be treated to such dainty fare?" Big Redcoat replied: "Do not be envious of the Pig, dear Brother, since the food that Munika eats is the food of death. The reason that he is being fattened is because he is to furnish the feast for the wedding of our master's daughter. Before long the wedding guests will arrive, and then you will see our friend Munika dragged out of his pen and chopped up and made into a savoury curry."

Not long afterwards the wedding guests arrived, as big Redcoat had predicted, and Munika was killed and made into all manner of savoury dishes. "Did you see what happened to Munika, dear Brother?" asked Big Redcoat. "Indeed I did," replied Little Redcoat. "It is better a hundred-fold to content ourselves with the food we get, even though it be only grass and straw, for it is a pledge that our lives will not be cut short."

(Munika Jataka, No. 30.)

THE STUPID MONKEYS

ONCE upon a time a tribe of Monkeys made their home in the pleasure-garden of the King of Benares. On a certain holiday, when the drum was beaten to call the people together, the King's

head gardener, hearing the drum, said to himself: "Even though it is a holiday, the garden must be watered. Accordingly, I will ask the Monkeys to water the garden for me, so that I can be off to enjoy myself, and keep holiday with the rest." So he called to the Monkeys and asked them to water the garden; and when the Monkeys had promised to water all the young trees faithfully, the gardener gave them the water-skins and the wooden watering-pot with which to perform their task. After the gardener had gone, the Monkeys took up the water-skins and the watering-pot and began to water the young trees. But the leader of the Monkeys stopped them: "Wait," said he, "we must be careful not to waste the water. Before you water them you must first pull up each tree and look at the size of the root. Then, you must give plenty of water to those which have long, deep roots, but only a little water to those that have short roots. For when this water is all gone, we shall have hard work to get any more."

"To be sure," said the other Monkeys, "that is what we must do." So they pulled up all the roots, just as their leader had told them to do,—and all the young trees died.

With every intention of doing good, the ignorant and foolish succeed only in doing harm.

(Aramadusaka Jataka, No. 51.)

THE JUDAS TREE

ONCE upon a time there was a King of Benares who had four sons. One day these four sons sent for the King's charioteer and said to him:

"We want to see what a Judas Tree is like; show us one!"

"Very well, I will do so when I can," replied the charioteer. But he did not show the Judas Tree to all four of them at once. It was then early springtime, and he at once took the eldest son to the forest in his chariot, and showed him the Tree at a time when the buds were just sprouting from their stems. To the second son he showed the Tree when the leaves were full-grown and formed a mass of rich green; to the third he showed it at the time of blossoming, and to the fourth son when it was bearing fruit.

Some time after this had happened the four brothers chanced to be sitting together in company with others, when some one asked: "What sort of a Tree is the Judas Tree?" Then the first brother answered:

"Like a burnt stump!"

And the second cried, "Like a Banyan Tree!"

And the third cried, "Like a piece of red meat!"

And the fourth cried, "Like the Acacia!"

The four brothers were vexed at one another's answers, and ran to find their father. "My Lord," they asked him, "what sort of a Tree is the Judas Tree?"

"What sort of a Tree do you think it is?" the King asked in return. Accordingly they told him the answers that each one of them had given. Then the King said:

"It is evident from your answers that all four of you have seen the Judas Tree. Only, when the charioteer showed you the Tree you none of you asked him, 'what does this Tree look like at other seasons of the year?' You made no distinctions between seasons, and that is the source of your mistake."

THE OTTERS AND THE JACKALS

ONCE upon a time two Otters whose names were Gambhiracari and Anutiracari, were standing on the bank of a river, on the lookout for fish. Presently Gambhiracari saw a large Rohita fish, and with one bound he dived into the water and caught it by the tail. It happened that this Rohita fish was very strong, and when it felt something grasping its tail, it dashed headlong down the river, dragging the Otter with it. He called out to the other Otter, "Friend Anutiracari, this great fish will be enough of a meal for us both, but it is so strong that it is dragging me away. Come and help me!"

The other Otter plunged in to his aid, and the two friends between them soon dragged out the Rohita fish, laid it on the bank of the river and killed it. But now they began to say to each other, "You divide the fish,"—"No, you divide it!"—"No, you!"—and soon they quarrelled and could not decide how the fish should be divided between them.

At that moment a Jackal, named Mayavi, happened to pass the spot. Upon seeing him, both the otters saluted him and said, "Oh, Lord of the grey grass-colour, this fish was caught by both of us together; but a dispute has arisen between us, because we cannot decide how to divide. Will you kindly make a fair division for us?"

After hearing their request, the Jackal replied, "I have decided many a difficult case and done it peacefully. I will settle yours with equal fairness." So saying, he cut off the head and tail of the Rohita fish, gave the head to Gambhiracari and the tail to Anutiracari, and seizing the whole body of the fish, he ran away with it before

their eyes, remarking as he went, "The best belongs to me, in payment for my trouble as umpire!"

(Darbhappha Jataka, No. 400.)

THE SEEDS AND THE WHEAT

THERE was once a man who entered a field of Wheat and stole some of the ripe grain. The owner of the field had the thief arrested, and demanded why he had stolen the Wheat. The thief replied: "My Lord, I have not stolen any Wheat belonging to you. You planted only the Seeds, and what I took was the ripe Wheat. Why do you call me a thief?"

The two men went before a Judge and asked him: "Which of us is right and which is wrong?" The Judge answered: "The one who sowed the Seed is right, and he who did not sow the Seed is wrong. The Seed is the origin of the Wheat. How should he who did not sow have any right to the Wheat that grew from it?"

(From Les Avadanes. By Stanislas Julien.)

PART II

PERSIAN FABLES

PART II

PERSIAN FABLES THE CAMEL AND THE RAT

A CAMEL, bound by a foot so that he could not wander, was browsing in a desert. A Rat, finding him without a guardian, decided to take hold of the leash and lead the Camel back to his rat-hole. As the Camel is naturally docile and never balky, he readily followed his new leader. But when they arrived at the threshold of the rat-hole it proved to be much too narrow. "You simpleton!" said the Camel, "what have you done? Don't you see that my body is too big and your home too little? The one will never grow any smaller nor the other bigger. How do you expect to keep me with you?"

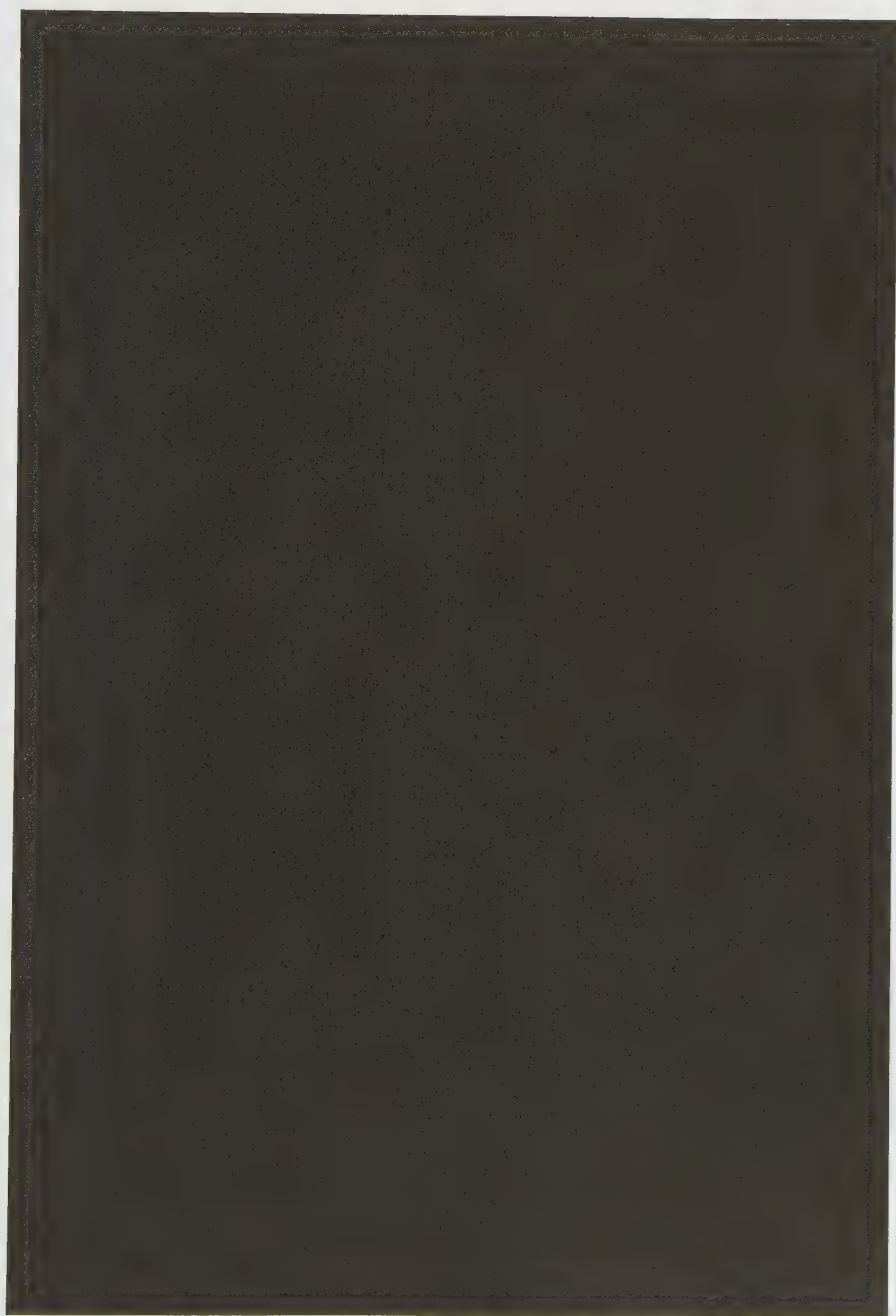
Good intentions are useless in the absence of common-sense.

(Jami, The Baharistan.)

THE CAMEL AND THE ASS

A CAMEL and an Ass were once travelling together. Upon reaching the bank of a river the Camel was the first to enter the water. As it rose somewhat above his knees, but barely touched his body, he called to his companion: "Follow me in, for the water hardly bathes my sides."

"I believe you," rejoined his wise, long-eared friend, "but between



to take a mouthful, he perceived an enormous serpent, coiled up like a ring and hidden in the depths of the bush. The Camel quickly shrank back and turned away his head, his appetite quite gone. The Shrub impudently asked him if his sudden change of mind was due to his fear of its sharp thorns. The Camel, disgusted by such conceit, replied, "Don't you see that it is the Serpent hidden under your leaves that startled me, and not the conceited plant that shelters the reptile. I am more afraid of one serpent's tooth than of the thorns of all the shrubs that grow. Be grateful to the crawling guest that has taken shelter beneath your leaves. But for him, I would have made but one mouthful of the whole of you."

It is not strange that a brave man fears the wicked. It is not their strength nor their courage, but their treachery that makes them dangerous.

(Jami, The Baharistan.)

THE RED WASP AND THE HONEY-BEE

A RED WASP one day attacked a Honey-bee eager to feast upon her sweetness. The Honey-bee began to weep, and said pitifully:

"Surrounded as we are by all the pure honey and sweet nectar of flowers, what attraction have I that you should leave them and pursue only me?"

The Wasp replied, "If there is pure honey in the world, you are the source thereof; if there is sweet nectar you are its fountainhead."

Happy is the man who knows the true from the false, and refuses to accept less.

(Jami, The Baharistan.)

THE YOUNG FOX AND HIS MOTHER

A YOUNG Fox said to his Mother: "Teach me a trick that will help me to escape, when I am close pressed by a dog, and my strength is failing." The Mother Fox replied: "There are many tricks for escaping from dogs and other enemies. But the best of them all is to remain hidden safe in your home, so that neither they see you nor you them."

It is best to avoid low company, whether they come in peace or in war.

(Jami, The Baharistan.)

THE FIREFLY

DOUBTLESS you have sometimes seen the Firefly, gleaming like a lamp, in the garden at night.

"Oh, Night-illuminating insect," some one said to the Firefly, "why can you not also shine in the day-time?"

The modest Firefly gave an answer full of wisdom: "Because no one would ever see me, in the light of the splendid sun!"

(Sadi, The Burstan.)

THE YOUNG CAMEL AND HIS MOTHER

A YOUNG Camel once said to its Mother, "After you have reached the end of this journey, rest for a while."

"If the bridle was in my own hands," the Mother Camel replied,

"no one would ever see me in the string of camels, plodding across the desert sands with a pack on my back."

One of the first rules of wise living is obedience.

(Sadi, The Burstan.)

ABDUL AZIZ AND THE PEARL

THE story is told of Abdul Aziz that he had a pearl of great beauty and value, set in a ring. Shortly afterwards there came a dry season, the crops failed, and there was great suffering among his people. Moved by compassion the King ordered that the pearl should be sold, and the money received for it given to the poor. One of his friends reproached him for doing this, saying:

"Never again will such a beautiful jewel come into your hands."

Sighing regretfully, the King answered: "Ugly is any ornament upon the person of a King when the hearts of his people are wrung with want and hunger. Better for me is a stoneless ring than a suffering people."

Moral. Happy is he who sets the welfare of others above his own.

(Sadi, The Burstan.)

THE RAIN-DROP

A RAIN-DROP fell from a spring cloud, and when it saw the wide expanse of the ocean it felt ashamed. "At best," it said, "I am only a Rain-drop,—but compared with the ocean I am nothing at all!"

But just at the moment that the little Rain-drop was judging itself

so humbly, an oyster opened her shell and took it to her bosom. And fate so shaped its course that in the end it became a famous royal pearl.

(Sadi, The Burstan.)

THE VULTURE AND THE KITE

A VULTURE said to a Kite, "No one can see as far as I." "That may be so," replied the Kite, "But what can you see yonder across the desert?" Gazing down from the lofty height in the skies, to which he had risen, the Vulture exclaimed, "Yonder on the ground I see a grain of wheat!" Thereupon the two birds flew down to the ground. As the Vulture swooped down upon the grain of wheat, he found himself caught in a trap. "What good did it do you," asked the Kite, "to see the grain of wheat from so far off, if you could not also see the trap that your enemy had set?" "Alas," replied the captive Vulture, "no amount of caution will protect us against fate!"

The unexpected will sometimes happen.

(Sadi, The Burstan.)

THE GREEDY CAT

IN former times there lived a certain old woman who was very, very poor. This old woman had a Cat that never had meat or a crust of bread, and thought herself lucky if once in a while she managed to catch a mouse. One day, when this hungry Cat managed

THE CAMEL DRIVER AND THE SNAKE

A CAMEL DRIVER, in the course of a journey, reached a certain spot where a passing caravan had carelessly left the embers of a fire. The wind had scattered the sparks on all sides amidst the dry grass and stubble, until a wide stretch of the plain glowed like a bed of red and yellow tulips. In the midst of the fire a huge Snake found itself caught and surrounded, and was on the point of roasting like a fish on a gridiron. Seeing the Camel Driver the Snake called for help. The Camel Driver said to himself, "Although a Snake is an enemy of mankind yet since this one is in danger of his life, it is my duty to help him."

Accordingly, the Camel Driver unfastened one of his saddle bags and having fixed it to the tip of the spear which he carried; he stretched it out across the flames in such manner that the Snake was able to crawl into the bag. Having thus rescued it from the fire, the Camel Driver opened the mouth of the bag and said to the Snake, "Go where you will, be thankful for your escape, and henceforth do no further harm to mankind."

The Snake replied, "Young man, do not waste your breath, for I have no intention of going until I have stung both you and your Camel. For I am the very source of evil, and can accept no benefits from man. In saving an evil beast like me, you have earned misfortune. Besides, in returning evil for good I am only following the custom of mankind."

The Camel Driver indignantly denied that such was the custom of man, and said, "If you can prove that it is the custom of man to

return evil for good, I will willingly
sent to my own death."

The Snake looked around at
the desert. "Come," said he,
question for us."

Accordingly, the Snake and
desert to the Buffalo, and the
recompense of good?"

The Buffalo answered,

the return for good is each
each year, and filled my
when I became old and
me, and turned me out

The Snake then
Prepare yourself to

The Camel Driver
the evidence of
what he says."

The Snake answered
"and let us go."

So they came
quired of it.

The first
for good
this will
When a
the d
oper
han

with your own eyes that we

with my own eyes the proof
an impartial decision on the

Snake, deceived by the Fox's
Then the Fox exclaimed, "Oh,
in your power, give him no

the Fox's advice, tied up the mouth of
the ground until the Snake's power to

Book III, Chapter 3.)

THE BLIND MAN AND THE SNAKE

Two men were blind, halted their horses in
of country, and dismounted for the

on their journey in the grey dawn of
Man searched upon the ground for his

that a snake lay there half frozen with
us whip, and picked it up. When he

found it much softer and nicer than his old
his horse much pleased, giving no fur-

he had lost. When daylight broke his com-
the Snake in the Blind Man's hand, where-

what you mistook for a whip is a
at once, before it stings you!"

The Blind Man thought that his companion envied him his fine whip, so he replied, "Ah, friend, I lost my whip and God has given me a better one. You, too, will doubtless find one as good if fortune favours you, but I am not the man to let any one cheat me out of my whip with fantastic tales and false alarms."

His companion laughed and said, "Friend, my sense of duty compelled me to warn you of your danger. You had best listen to what I say, and throw down the Snake."

At this the Blind Man became angry, and said, "You can't fool me! You have taken a fancy to my whip, and are urging me to throw it away so that you may take advantage of my blindness and secure it for yourself. Give up that hope, for the whip came to me miraculously and I shall hold it fast."

The more his comrade urged him to drop the Snake, the more closely the Blind Man clung to it. But at last, when the sun had mounted high and shone hotly down upon them, the Snake recovered its activity, and twisting itself around stung the Blind Man upon his hand and killed him.

(The Anvar-i Suhaili or The Lights of Canopus.)

PART III

CHINESE FABLES

PART III
CHINESE FABLES

THE BITTERN AND THE MUSSEL



ONCE on the bank of the River Yi a Mussel was basking in the sunshine. All at once a Bittern, happening to pass by, discovered the Mussel and pecked at it. The Mussel snapped its shell together and nipped the bird's beak; but no matter how tightly the Mussel nipped, the bird would not withdraw his beak. Presently the Bittern said:

"If you don't open your shell to-day, if you don't open your shell to-morrow, there will be a dead Mussel."

The shell-fish said in reply:

"If you don't take your beak out to-day, if you don't take your beak out to-morrow, there will be a dead Bittern."

But as neither could make up its mind to loose its hold upon the other, a fisherman, who happened to come that way, seized the pair of them and carried them off for his dinner.

(Translated from the Chinese by C. Arendt. China Review Vol. 12, p. 62.)

THE FOX AND THE TIGER

ONCE upon a time the Tiger was in the habit of chasing all the beasts of the forests and devouring them. Among others he one day caught a fox, and prepared to dine on him. But the Fox said:

"You must not eat me. For the Lord of Heaven has appointed me

him. And while the Prince's whole attention was fixed upon the Goldfinch, he little knew that close beside him was a deep ditch, nearly full of water. The Prince slipped and fell into the water. The noise of the splash startled the Goldfinch, which swiftly flew away; while the Beetle scurried back into his hole, leaving the Locust to finish his song in peace.

Moral. There is no greater folly than to be so intent upon the advantage before your eyes that you pay no heed to the danger behind your back.

(Translated from the Chinese by C. Arendt. China Review, Vol. 13. p. 23.)

THE KING AND THE HORSES THAT TURNED THE MILLS

ONCE on a time there was a certain King who was so miserly that for a long time his army had no cavalry, because of the high price of horses. But at last he was persuaded to buy five hundred horses as a protection against his enemies. When he had fed these horses for some time, and his kingdom was at peace with all the world, the King said to himself: "It is costing a great deal to feed these five hundred horses. They have to be cared for all the time, and are of no use in protecting my kingdom." So he ordered the master of the royal stables to blind the eyes of the horses, and set them turning the mills, so that they would at least earn their living, and not be an expense to the kingdom.

After the horses had been for a long time used to turning the mills, all of a sudden a neighbouring King raised troops, and invaded the country. The King at once gave orders to equip the horses, and provide them with harness of war in order to provide mounts for

his brave soldiers. When the hour for battle came, the soldiers whipped and spurred their horses to drive them forward against the enemy and break his ranks. But when the horses felt the whip and spur they began turning round and round in a circle, and refused to go forward. The enemy's troops quickly saw that this cavalry was good for nothing. So they marched against it and quickly crushed the King's whole army.

(Translated from the Chinese by M. S. Julien. Paris, 1859.)

THE CROW AND THE PEACOCK

ONE day the Peacock said to the Crow:
"This is Lord Tiger's wedding-day. How shall we adorn ourselves for the wedding?"

At that time the Crow was white and the Peacock yellow like a hen.

"I have an idea!" the Crow replied. "The king of Annam is having a house built. It is a wonderful house! The walls are being decorated with all the colours of the rainbow. There are dragons that are green and red, yellow and blue. The workmen have gone to eat their luncheon. We will run and get their pots of paint."

The Crow immediately put his idea into execution.

The Peacock insisted upon being painted first.

The Crow, wishing to show his ability, painted upon the Peacock's feathers moons of yellow and green, arabesques of blue and black.

The Peacock was magnificent. He went to look at himself in the water of the river, spreading out his tail to dry his feathers. But

when he saw that he was so handsome he continued to spread his tail, even after his feathers were dry.

"*Kwong-toh! Kwong-toh!* How beautiful I am! How beautiful I am!"

Just then the Crow called to him:

"Friend, it is your turn to show your cleverness!"

But the Peacock was proud and jealous. He had no intention of decorating the crow for Lord Tiger's wedding. So he said:

"Didn't you hear the cry of that eagle? We must fly! We must hide ourselves!"

And, pretending a great haste, he ran against the pots of paint and knocked them into the river.

"I did not hear an eagle cry," said the Crow.

"Then, I must have been mistaken. Come, I will paint you."

"The paint is at the bottom of the river," the Crow said.

"But here is one pot."

"Then hurry!"

"There! You're lovely!"

The Crow went to look at himself in the water of the river—and found that he had been cruelly deceived. He wished to complain; but his voice choked in his throat, and he could only scream harshly:

"*Caw! Caw!*"

Ever since then crows have been black and have had a harsh voice; while Peacocks are made gorgeous with a thousand colours.

But their voice is no better for that!

Beware of false friends.

(From Contes et Légendes de l'Annam.)

his opportunity, the Crow stole a firebrand from the fire of some neighbouring peasants, and setting fire to the brushwood, smothered all the Owls to death.

Never trust a renegade.

(Folk-lore of China. By N. B. Dennys. London, 1876.)

THE FOLLY OF AVARICE

A WEALTHY Priest had hoarded a fine collection of Jewels, to which he was constantly adding, and of which he was inordinately proud. One day when he was showing them to a friend, the latter feasted his eyes upon them for some time, and presently, upon taking leave, gratefully thanked his host for the Jewels. "How is that," cried the Priest, "you must have misunderstood! I have not given the Jewels to you, why do you thank me?" "Well," rejoined his friend, "I have at least had as much pleasure from looking at the Jewels, as you can possibly have. The only difference between us that I can see is that I am free from all care, while you have the trouble of guarding them."

(Folk-lore of China. By N. D. Dennys, London, 1876.)

PART IV

ARMENIAN AND TURKISH FABLES

PART IV
ARMENIAN AND TURKISH FABLES

THE VIOLET AND THE IRIS



N the early spring, some one praised the Violet for its loveliness, telling it that it was so beautiful that it looked like an Iris. Believing this, the foolish Violet at once sent an ambassador to the Iris in order to make friends with the royal purple flower, because of this fancied resemblance.

The Iris returned this answer, "You are now beautiful with blossoms, while I—my flowers are still hidden in their tight-wrapped buds. Wait until I, too, am in blossom."

A few days later the lovely Violet faded and died; and when the Iris flowered, the Violet had completely disappeared.

Be content with your own blessings. While you are envying those of others, your own may vanish.

(Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.)

THE SUN'S WANING GLORY

THE Sun believed, each morning when he rose, that he was a God. But at night, when he set, he had to hide himself down beneath the Earth, and then he recognized his unimportance.

Do not feel too much exalted by the glory of victory, for the time may come when your glory will wane.

(Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.)

THE VAIN CEREALS

THE vain Cereals were disputing among themselves as to which of them should rule over the others.

"I am the best," declared the Barley. "for I have sixty grains."

"Nay, I am the most worthy," said the Millet, "for I have a hundred grains."

The Wheat alone remained silent.

Their King, seeing the humility of the Wheat, appointed him above all the others, and second only to the King himself.

(Fables de Mkhûhar Goch. Journal Asiatique. Ser. 9. Vol. 19.)

THE WATERMELON

A MAN, entering a garden, cut off a Watermelon and was about to eat it, when the Watermelon cried out in alarm:

"What would you do. O man? Do you not know that I am an Elephant's egg? If you carry me away and keep me unbroken, I shall hatch out for you a little Elephant, that will be worth hundreds of dollars."

The foolish man, happy to have such a prize, carried it home with him and kept it carefully. But when the Watermelon only rotted, instead of hatching out a little Elephant, he threw it away in disgust. And thus the Watermelon escaped the knife.

If you fall into the hands of wicked men, pretend to be of great value, and perhaps you will be spared until you have a chance to escape.

(Fables de Mkhûhar Goch. Journal Asiatique. Ser. 9. Vol. 19.)

THE HIGHWAYMAN AND THE PRIEST

A HIGHWAYMAN, having waylaid a Priest, prepared to kill him. The Priest suddenly found himself possessed of great strength, and he fought and conquered the Highwayman, and punished him as his conduct merited. The Highwayman cried for mercy and said: "How can you, who are a Priest, treat me thus, when you are all the time preaching 'Peace to all the earth,' and other similar teachings?" The Priest replied: "Oh, wicked Highwayman, it is in order to keep Peace on earth that I am maltreating you—you who do not know the beauty of Peace!"

This Fable teaches us that it is right to resist injustice, not from love of combat, but to prevent the troubling of Peace.

(Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.)

THE BIG FISH AND THE FROGS

THERE was once a certain Big Fish who felt a great desire to feed upon Frogs. But he could not reach them, for they were safely sheltered in their swamp. So the Big Fish tried flattering them, saying: "Oh, Frogs, what beautiful hands and feet you have! And when you croak in chorus your voices are as sweet as an organ. Why do you not come nearer so that I may enjoy the sight of you?" The Frogs, understanding his purpose, answered: "You praise our shape and you praise our voice; but we know very well that it is not for the sake of our shape or voice that you want us, but for the taste of our tender flesh."

This Fable teaches that we should weigh carefully the words of

flatterers; for they often betray themselves by their own words, no matter how artfully they conceal their meaning.

(*Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.*)

THE PLUM, THE PRUNE AND THE APRICOT

THE Plum, the Prune and the Apricot were once reproached for setting on edge the teeth of those who eat them. They answered: "You do not know what you are talking about. All doctors know that we often upset the stomach. Nevertheless people insist upon eating us. Now if we make trouble in spite of our acid taste, think what endless mischief we would cause if we didn't set teeth on edge. You ought to be grateful rather than reproach us."

Forbidden pleasures leave a bitter taste.

(*Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique Ser. 9, Vol. 19.*)

THE PLANTER AND THE POMEGRANATE

A N inexperienced Planter once asked a Pomegranate Tree: "Why do you produce so many blossoms, and then let so large a number of them fall to the ground without producing fruit?" The Pomegranate replied: "The eye of the Planter is greedy. My branches are slender and my fruit is heavy, and if I did not bend easily I could not sustain the weight of it. That is why I let many of the blossoms fall, so as not to be broken by more fruit than I can bear."

This fable is a reproof to masters who tax the strength of their servants beyond the limits ordained by Providence.

(*Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.*)

THE FIG-TREE AND HIS BRANCHES

THE Fig-tree was once asked why he stretched out so many of his lower Branches so close to the ground. He replied: "Because I have many enemies, and I have learned to bow low to them so that my Branches will not be broken. Thus they easily reach my fruit, and before they have begun to climb I have won their favour and made them forget their malice."

This fable teaches that if we cannot hope to conquer an enemy, we should meet him with kindness and humility, and spread a generous table before him. In this way he will be disarmed and forget his evil purposes.

(Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.)

THE THORN AND THE VINE

THE Thorn, which had long borne a grudge against the Vine, one day said in quarrelsome tone: "I grow and thrive like yourself, and like you I yield my fruit, and in one way I am superior to you since I do not wither and shed my leaves during the winter." The Vine silenced him by saying: "Your glory will be complete when your fruit is gathered in the autumn for the vintage." But when autumn came, instead of being gathered, the Thorn was trodden under foot.

We learn from this Fable that foolish vanity should be silenced, and not allowed to claim a perfection which it lacks. For one defect is enough to offset many virtues.

(Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.)

THE TREES CHOOSING A KING

THE Trees once met in council to decide which one of them was best fitted to reign over the others. Some proposed the Date, because it was tall and its fruit was sweet. The Vine objected, saying: "It is I, with my wine, that give joy to the world, and for that reason I deserve to be King." In like manner each Tree was found to consider itself superior to the rest, and unwilling to accept any other for King. The Date, upon reflecting, understood that the reason why none of the Trees would agree to another reigning was because none was willing to share the honours with the rest. Accordingly, he said: "You admit that I have a better claim to be King than any of the rest of you?" They all admitted this, saying: "Yes, for you are tall, and your fruit is sweet. You lack only two things: you do not give your fruit at the same season that we give ours; and your wood is not good for building. Besides, you are so tall that there are many who cannot enjoy your fruit." The Date answered: "If you choose me for your King I will make each and all of you Princes; and in the fullness of time I will reign over your children and your children's children." Hearing this promise, the Trees all hailed the Date as their King, and he forthwith proclaimed the order of the Kingdom, appointing each Tree to its separate post of honour: The Vine, Chief Toastmaster; the Fig, Prime Minister; the Thorn, Chief Executioner; the Pomegranate, Court Physician; and so to each and every Tree and Plant its special post and task.

This fable teaches that no one can reign without the help of the humble, nor rise in the world unless aided by those below him. Also favours received give hope of greater favours to come.

(*Fables de Mkhithar Goch, Journal Asiatique, Ser. 9, Vol. 19.*)

THE PRINCE AND THE FLEA

A PRINCE of Royal blood was once sadly tormented by a Flea. At last he caught the troublesome pest, and was about to kill it when the Flea said: "I beg of you, do not kill me, for the harm I have done you is small." "Yes," replied the Prince, before he crushed it, "but you did me all the harm that you could!"

This Fable teaches that even small offenders must be punished, in order that big criminals may see and tremble.

(Fables de Vartan. Paris, 1825.)

THE FOX AND THE ICICLE

A HUNGRY Fox, searching for food one winter day, came across a long, fine Icicle, shaped very much like a bone, and fell to gnawing it eagerly. "A plague upon it!" said he, "there is the sound of a bone in my ears, and the feel of a bone between my teeth, but never a scrap of it goes down into my stomach!"

This Fable teaches that we must not judge by appearances.

(Fables de Vartan. Paris, 1825.)

THE THIRTY-TWO TEETH

A SYRIAN Philosopher, both good and wise, was arguing one day with an Armenian, when the latter, who was young and quick tempered, became angry and cried:

"I have half a mind to fling this stone in your mouth and knock out every one of your thirty-two teeth!"

The astonished Philosopher left the Armenian standing there and hurried home to consult his wife. "In Heaven's name, good wife," he said, "light the lamp and count my teeth, for I am anxious to know how many I have." The Philosopher's wife counted his teeth, and then said, "Indeed, husband, I find that you have thirty-two teeth, neither more nor less."

The Philosopher hurried back to find his friend the Armenian, and asked him, "Pray tell me, how did you know how many teeth I have?"

"Good master," replied the Armenian, "I judged the number of your teeth from my own."

Just as the Armenian knew the number of the Philosopher's teeth, so may we know from our own faults the faults of others, since all men have the same faults in common.

(Fables de Vartan.)

THE TWO KINGS AT WAR

A CERTAIN King, who was the hero of his century, had declared war on one of his neighbours. The enemy, who were poor in resources, and had not been able to make the necessary preparations, were at a loss how to defend themselves. Accordingly, their King sent a spy to meet the advancing host. This spy, watching from a distance, saw advancing an innumerable host of soldiers armed with lances. Straightway he turned his horse and galloped back to his sovereign. "Lord," he said, "you are going to be attacked by an army as vast as a fortune, for I have seen so many lances advancing

that they will hide the sun!" "Take this robe of honour," said the Monarch. "If it pleases God, we will fight to-day in the shadow cast by the enemies' lances." By this war-like answer he inspired his followers with unconquerable courage and valour.

(Fables Turques. Traduites par J. A. Decourdemanche. Paris, 1882.)

BOOK THREE
MODERN FABLES

PART I

ENGLISH FABLES

PART I

ENGLISH FABLES

VERBATIM FROM BOILEAU



NCE (says an author, where I need not say)
Two travellers found an Oyster in their way:
Both fierce, both hungry, the dispute grew strong,
While, scale in hand, Dame Justice pass'd along.
Before her each with clamour pleads the laws,

Explained the matter and would win the cause.
Dame Justice weighing long the doubtful right,
Takes, opens, swallows it before their sight.
The cause of strife remov'd so rarely well,
"There take (says Justice), take ye each a shell.
We thrive at Westminster on fools like you.
'Twas a fat Oyster—live in peace—Adieu."

(Alexander Pope.)

THE LOST CAMEL

A DERVISH was journeying alone in the desert, when two Merchants suddenly met him. "You have lost a Camel," said he to the Merchants. "Indeed we have," they replied. "Was he not blind in his right eye, and lame in his left leg?" said the Dervish. "He was," replied the Merchants. "Had he lost a front tooth?" said

the Dervish. "He had," rejoined the Merchants. "And was he not loaded with honey on one side, and wheat on the other?"—"Most certainly he was," they replied: "and you have seen him so lately, and marked him so particularly, you can, in all probability, conduct us to him."—"My friends," said the Dervish, "I have never seen your Camel, nor ever heard of him but from yourselves."—"A pretty story, truly!" said the Merchants; "but where are the jewels which formed a part of his cargo?"—"I have neither seen your Camel nor your jewels," repeated the Dervish. On this, they seized him, and hurried him before the Cadi, or Judge, where, on the strictest search, nothing could be found upon him, nor could any evidence be offered to convict him, either of falsehood or of theft. They were then about to proceed against him as a sorcerer, when the Dervish, with great calmness, thus addressed the court: "I have been much amused with your surprise, and own that there has been some ground for your suspicions; but I have lived long, and alone; and I can find ample scope for observation, even in a desert. I knew that I had crossed the track of a Camel that had strayed from its owner, because I saw no mark of any human footsteps on the same route; I knew that the animal was blind of one eye, because it had cropped the herbage only on one side of the path: and I perceived that it was lame of one leg from the faint impression that one of its feet had produced upon the sand; I concluded that the animal had lost one tooth, because wherever it had grazed, a small tuft of grass was left uninjured, in the centre of its bite. As to that which formed the burden of the beast, the busy ants informed me that it was wheat on the one side, and the clustering flies, that it was honey on the other."

(*Oliver Goldsmith.*)

THE SPECTACLES

HOW strangely all mankind differ in their opinions! and how strongly each is attached to his own!

Jupiter one day, enjoying himself over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humour, determined to make mankind a present. Momus was appointed to convey it to them; who, mounted on a rapid car, was presently on earth. "Come hither," said he, "ye happy mortals; great Jupiter has opened for your benefit his all-gracious hands. It is true, he made you somewhat short-sighted, but to remedy that inconvenience, behold how he has favoured you." So saying, he unloosed his portmanteau, when an infinite number of spectacles tumbled out, and were picked up by the crowd with all the eagerness imaginable. There were enough for all; every man had his pair: but it was soon found that these spectacles did not represent objects to all mankind alike; for one pair was purple, another blue; one was white, and another black: some of the glasses were red, some green, and some yellow. In short, they were of all manner of colours, and every shade of colour. However, notwithstanding this diversity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the truest, and enjoyed in opinion all the satisfaction of reality.

(Oliver Goldsmith.)

THE YOUNG LADY AND THE LOOKING-GLASS

THERE was a little stubborn Dame,
Whom no authority could tame;
Restive by long indulgence grown,

No will she minded but her own:
At trifles oft she'd scold and fret,
Then in a corner take a seat,
And, sourly moping all the day,
Disdain alike to work or play.

Papa all softer arts had tried,
And sharper remedies applied;
But both were vain; for ev'ry course
He took, still made her worse and worse.
'Tis strange to think how female wit
So oft should make a lucky hit;
When man with all his high pretence
To deeper judgment, sounder sense,
Will err, and measures false pursue—
'Tis very strange, I own, but true—
Mamma observed the rising lass,
By stealth retiring to the glass,
To practise little airs unseen,
In the true genius of thirteen.
On this a deep design she laid
To tame the humour of the Maid;
Contriving like a prudent Mother,
To make one folly cure another.
Upon the wall, against the seat
Which Jessy used for her retreat,
Whene'er by accident offended,
A Looking-Glass was straight suspended,
That it might show her how deformed,
She looked, and frightful when she stormed;

And warn her as she prized her beauty,
To bend her humour to her duty.
All this the Looking-Glass achieved;
Its threats were minded and believed.

The Maid who spurned at all advice,
Grew tame and gentle in a trice:
So, when all other means had failed,
The silent monitor prevailed.

Thus, Fable to the human kind
Presents an image of the mind:
It is a mirror, where we spy
At large our own deformity:
And learn of course those faults to mend
Which but to mention would offend.

(*T. Moore.*)

THE MAN AND THE FLEA

W HETHER in earth, in air, or main,
Sure everything alive is vain!
Does not the Hawk all fowls survey
As destined only for his prey?
And do not Tyrants, prouder things,
Think men were born for slaves to kings?
"What dignity's in human nature!"
Says Man, the most conceited creature,
As from a cliff he casts his eyes,
And views the sea with arching skies:

"When I behold this glorious show,
 And the wide wat'ry world below,
 The scaly people of the main,
 The beasts that range the wood or plain,
 The winged inhabitants of air,
 The day, the night, the various year,
 And know all these by Heaven designed
 As gifts to pleasure human-kind:
 I cannot raise my worth too high;
 Of what vast consequence am I!"

"Not of th' importance you suppose,"
 Replies a Flea upon his nose:
 "Be humble, learn thyself to scan:
 Know, pride was never made for Man.
 'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.
 What, Heaven and Earth for thee designed!
 For thee! Made only for our need,
 That *more important Fleas* might feed."

(John Gay.)

THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
 Unless to one you stint the flame,
 The child, whom many guardians share,
 Hath seldom known a father's care.
 'Tis thus in friendship; who depend
 On many, rarely find a friend.
 A hare, who in a civil way

Complied with ev'rything, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain.
Her care was, never to offend;
And ev'ry creature was her friend.

As forth she went, at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouth'd thunder flies;
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath,
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles to mislead the hound
And measures back her mazy round;
Till, fainting in the public way
Half-dead with fear she gasping lay.

What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the horse appear'd in view!

"Let me," says she, "your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight;
To friendship ev'ry burthen's light."

The horse replied, "Poor honest Puss!
It grieves my heart to see thee thus:
Be comforted, relief is near;
For all your friends are in the rear."

She next the stately bull implor'd,
And thus replied the mighty lord;
"Since ev'ry beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,

I may, without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence; a fav'rite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow;
And when a lady's in the case
You know all other things give place,
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the goat is just behind."

The goat remark'd her pulse was high,
Her languid head, her heavy eye;
"My back," says he, "may do you harm;
The sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."

The sheep was feeble, and complain'd
His sides a load of wool sustain'd:
Said he was slow, confess'd his fears,
For hounds eat sheep as well as hares.

She now the trotting calf address'd,
To save from death a friend distress'd,
"Shall I," says he, "of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler pass'd you by;
How strong are those! how weak am I!
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.
Excuse me, then. You know my heart,
But dearest friends, alas! must part.
How shall we all lament! Adieu!
For see, the hounds are just in view."

(*John Gay.*)

THE TURKEY AND THE ANT

A TURKEY, tired of common food,
Forsook the barn and sought the wood;
Behind her ran her infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.
"Draw near, my birds," the mother cries,
"This hill delicious fare supplies;
Behold the busy negro race,
See millions blacken all the place!
Fear not; like me, with freedom eat;
An Ant is most delightful meat.
How bless'd, how envied were our life,
Could we but 'scape the polt'rer's knife!
But man, curs'd man, on Turkeys preys,
And Christmas shortens all our days!
Sometimes with oysters we combine,
Sometimes assist the savory chine;
From the low peasant to the lord,
The Turkey smokes upon the board.
Sure, men for gluttony are curs'd,
Of all the sev'n deadly sins the worst."

An Ant, who climbed beyond her reach,
Thus answered from a neighbouring beech:
"Ere you remark another's sin,
Bid thy own conscience look within;
Control thy more voracious bill,
Nor, for a breakfast, nations kill."

In other folks we faults can spy,
And blame the mote that dims their eye;
Each little speck and blemish find:—
To our own grosser errors blind.

(John Gay.)

THE BOY AND THE RAINBOW

ONE evening, as a simple Swain
His flocks attended on the plain,
The shining Bow he chanced to spy
Which warns us when a shower is nigh.

With brightest rays it seemed to glow;
Its distance, eighty yards or so.
This bumpkin had, it seems, been told
The story of the Cup of Gold,

Which, Fame reports, is to be found
Just where the Rainbow meets the ground.
He therefore felt a sudden itch
To seize the goblet and be rich;

Hoping, yet hopes are oft but vain,
No more to toil through wind and rain,
But sit indulging by the fire,
Midst ease and plenty like a Squire.

He marked the very spot of land
On which the Rainbow seemed to stand,
And, stepping forward at his leisure,
Expected to have found the treasure.

But as he moved, the coloured ray
Still changed its place and slipped away,
As seeming his approach to shun.
From walking, he began to run;

But all in vain; it still withdrew
As nimbly as he could pursue.
At last through many a bog and lake,
Rough, craggy road and thorny brake,

It led the easy fool till night
Approached, then vanished from his sight,
And left him to compute his gains,
With nought but Labour for his Pains.

(John Gay.)

THE FARMER'S WIFE AND THE RAVEN

BETWIXT her swagging panniers' load
A Farmer's Wife to market rode,
And jogging on, with thoughtful care,
Summ'd up the profits of her ware;
When starting from her silver dream,

me see," he said gravely, "Yes, this lump outweighs the other," and immediately bit off a piece, "to make it balance," as he explained. The opposite scale had now become the heavier, which gave this careful judge an excuse for a second mouthful. "Hold, hold!" cried the two Cats, who began to be alarmed as to the outcome, "Give us our respective shares and we will be satisfied."

"Even if you are satisfied," returned the Monkey, "Justice is not. A case of this difficult nature is not so quickly decided." Upon which he continued to nibble first one piece and then the other; until the poor Cats, seeing their cheese gradually diminishing, begged him to give himself no further trouble but hand over to them what remained.

"Not so fast, my good friends," replied the Monkey. "We owe justice to ourselves as well as to you. What remains is due to me for my services." Upon which he crammed the rest of the cheese into his mouth, and gravely dismissed the Court.

(Robert Dodsley, Original Fables.)

THE BOYS AND THE FROGS

ON the margin of a large lake, which was inhabited by a great number of Frogs, a company of Boys happened to be at play. The game they were playing was ducks and drakes; and whole volleys of stones were thrown into the water, to the great annoyance and danger of the poor terrified Frogs. At length one of the boldest Frogs lifted up his head above the surface of the lake:

"Ah! dear children," said he, "why will you learn so soon the cruel habits of the human race? Consider, I beseech you, that though this may be sport for you, it is death to us."

(Robert Dodsley, Original Fables.)

ECHO AND THE OWL

A SOLEMN Owl, puffed up with vanity, sat repeating her screams at midnight from the hollow of a blasted oak. "For what reason," she cried, "is this awesome silence, unless for the sake of my superior music? Surely all the groves are hushed, in expectation of my song, and when I sing all Nature listens." An Echo, resounding from a neighbouring rock, at once replied: "All Nature listens."—"The Nightingale," resumed the Owl, "has usurped the sovereignty of night: her notes are indeed musical, but my own are far sweeter." Echo, confirming her opinion, again replied, "Are far sweeter."—"Then why should I be diffident," continued the Owl, "why should I hesitate to join the tuneful choir?" Echo, still flattering the Owl's vanity, repeated: "Join the tuneful choir."

Trusting to the encouragement of an empty Echo, the Owl on the following morning mingled her hootings with the sweet melodies of the grove. But the feathered songsters, disgusted with her noise, and indignant at her impudence, one and all drove her from their society, and still continue to pursue her whenever she appears.

The vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and believe them to be the voice of Fame.

(Robert Dodsley, Original Fables, No. 12.)

THE FLY IN SAINT PAUL'S CUPOLA

A S a Fly was crawling leisurely up one of the columns of the Cupola of Saint Paul's Cathedral he often stopped, surveyed, examined and at last broke forth into the following exclamation:

"How strange that any one who claims to be an artist should ever leave a superb structure like this so rough and unfinished!"

"Ah! my friend," returned that skilful architect, the Spider, who was just then hanging his web under one of the capitals of the columns, "you should never express opinions of matters beyond your understanding. This lofty building was not made for such tiny creatures as you and I, but for a very different sort of beings, men, who are at least ten thousand times as large. To their eyes, perhaps, these columns may seem as smooth as the delicate wings of your beloved mate appear to yours."

(Robert Dodsley, Original Fables.)

THE SPIDER AND THE SILK-WORM

HOW vainly do we promise ourselves that our flimsy productions will be rewarded with immortal honour!

A spider, busied in spreading his web from one side of the room to the other, was asked by an industrious silk-worm, to what end he spent so much time and labour, in making such a number of lines and circles? The spider angrily replied: "Do not disturb me, thou ignorant thing. I transmit my ingenuity to posterity, and fame is the object of my wishes." Just as he had spoken, a chambermaid coming into the room to feed her silk-worms, saw the spider at his work: and with one stroke of her broom swept him away, destroying at once his labour and his hopes of fame.

(Robert Dodsley.)

THE TWO LIZARDS

AS two lizards were basking under a south wall: "How contemptible," said one of them, "is our condition! We exist, it is true, but that is all, for we hold no sort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world. Cursed obscurity! why was I not born a stag, to range at large, the pride and glory of some royal forest?" It happened, that in the midst of these unjust murmurs, a pack of hounds was heard in full cry after the very creature he was envying, which being quite spent with the chase, was torn in pieces by the dogs, in sight of the two lizards. "And is this the lordly stag, whose place in the creation you wish to hold?" said the wiser lizard to his complaining friend. "Let his fate teach you to bless Providence for placing you in that humble situation which secures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank."

(Robert Dodsley.)

THE BOY AND THE FILBERTS

A CERTAIN Boy put his hand into a pitcher where great plenty of Figs and Filberts were deposited; he grasped as many as his fist could possibly hold, but when he endeavoured to pull it out, the narrowness of the neck prevented him. Unwilling to lose any of them, but unable to draw out his hand, he burst into tears, and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune. An honest fellow who stood by, gave him this wise and reasonable advice:—"Grasp only half the quantity, my boy, and you will easily succeed."

(Dodsley, Fables.)

THE BOY AND THE NETTLE

A BOY playing in the fields got stung by a Nettle. He ran home to his mother, telling her that he had but touched that nasty weed, and it had stung him. "It was just your touching it, my boy," said the mother, "that caused it to sting you; the next time you meddle with a Nettle, grasp it tightly, and it will do you no hurt."

Do boldly what you do at all.

(Dodsley, Original Fables, No. 19.)

THE STARS AND THE SKY-ROCKET

A S a Rocket shot upward through the air, one holiday night, and saw the trail of light that marked his passage, he could not resist exulting in his proud ascent, and calling upon the Stars to do him homage.

"Behold," said he, "what gaping multitudes admire the brilliance of my train, while all your feeble sparks of light are disregarded!"

The Stars heard this foolish boast in silent indignation; only the Dog-star deigned to answer him:

"Do not measure your importance," said he, "by the capricious fancy of the fickle crowd. Remember that you are only a part of the gaudy display of a passing moment. Even while I speak, your blaze is half burnt out, and you are at this instant sinking into endless darkness. Whereas our fires are lighted up by Heaven for the admiration and benefit of the universe; and our glory shall endure forever."

(Dodsley, Original Fables, No. 38.)

not discover the cause. Looking about him, he perceived a small Bird issuing forth from the hollow of a tree, whose beautiful plumage was variegated like the rainbow, and whose size was hardly larger than that of a Bumble-bee.

"Is it you, little insect, that makes this loud humming noise?" exclaimed the Traveller.

"Yes," replied the Bird, "you need not be surprised at that, since it happens as often among men as among animals, that those of least consequence make the most noise."

(*Dr. Aikin.*)

THE CHAMELEON

OF T has it been my lot to mark
A proud, conceited, talking spark,
With eyes that hardly served at most
To guard their master 'gainst a post;
Yet round the world the blade has been,
To see whatever could be seen.
Returning from his finished tour,
Grown ten times perter than before;
Whatever word you chance to drop,
The travelled fool your mouth will stop:
"Sir, if my judgment you'll allow—
I've seen—and sure I ought to know."
So begs you pay a due submission,
And acquiesce in his decision.

Two travellers of such a cast,
As o'er Arabia's wilds they passed,
And on their way, in friendly chat,
Now talked of this, and then of that;
Discoursed awhile, 'mongst other matter,
Of the chameleon's form and nature.

"A stranger animal," cries one,
"Sure never lived beneath the sun:
A lizard's body lean and long,
A fish's head, a serpent's tongue,
Its foot with triple claw disjoined;
And what a length of tail behind!
How slow its pace! And then its hue,—
Who ever saw so fine a blue?"

"Hold there," the other quick replies,
" 'Tis green, I saw it with these eyes,
As late with open mouth it lay,
And warmed it in the sunny ray;
Stretched at its ease the beast I viewed,
And saw it eat the air for food."

"I've seen it, sir, as well as you,
And must again affirm it blue;
At leisure I the beast surveyed
Extended in the cooling shade."

" 'Tis green, 'tis green, sir, I assure ye."

"Green!" cries the other in a fury;
"Why, sir, d'ye think I've lost my eyes?"

" 'Twere no great loss," the friend replies;
"For if they always serve you thus,

You'll find them but of little use."

So high at last the contest rose,
From words they almost came to blows:
When luckily came by a third;
To him the question they referred;
And begged he'd tell them, if he knew,
Whether the thing was green or blue.

"Sirs," cries the umpire, "cease your pother,
The creature's neither one nor t'other.
I caught the animal last night,
And viewed it o'er by candle-light;
I marked it well, 'twas black as jet—
You stare—but, sirs, I've got it yet,
And can produce it." "Pray, sir, do;
I'll lay my life the thing is blue."

"And I'll be sworn, that when you've seen
The reptile, you'll pronounce him green."
"Well, then, at once to ease the doubt,"
Replies the man, "I'll turn him out;
And when before your eyes I've set him,
If you don't find him black, I'll eat him,"

He said; and full before their sight
Produced the beast, and lo!—'twas white.
Both stared; the man looked wondrous wise—

"My children," the chameleon cries
(Then first the chameleon found a tongue),
"You all are right, and all are wrong:
When next you talk of what you view,

Think others see as well as you:
Nor wonder if you find that none
Prefers your eyesight to his own."

(James Merrick.)

THE BEARS AND THE BEES

AS two young Bears, in wanton mood,
Forth issuing from a neighbouring wood,
Came where the industrious Bees had stored,
In artful cells, their luscious hoard;
O'erjoyed, they seized with eager haste,
Luxurious, on the rich repast.
Alarmed at this, the little crew
About their ears vindictive flew.
The beasts, unable to sustain
The unequal combat, quit the plain;
Half blind with rage and mad with pain,
Their native shelter they regain;
There sit, and now discreeter grown,
Too late their rashness they bemoan;
And this, by dear experience, gain: —
That pleasure's ever bought with pain.

So, when the gilded baits of vice
Are placed before our longing eyes,
With greedy haste we snatch our fill
And swallow down the latent ill:
But when experience opes our eyes,

Away the fancied pleasure flies.
It flies, but, oh! too late we find
It leaves a real sting behind.

(James Merrick.)

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE GLOW-WORM

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put it in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent.
"Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
"As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the self-same power divine,
Taught you to sing and me to shine,
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night."

The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

(William Cowper.)

THE LILY AND THE ROSE

WITHIN the garden's peaceful scene,
Appear'd two lovely foes,
Aspiring to the rank of queen,—
The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon redden'd with rage:
And swelling with disdain,
Appeal'd to many a poet's page,
To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
A fair imperial flower;
She seemed designed for Flora's hand,
The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate,
The goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save ere yet too late,
The pride of the parterre.

"Yours is," she said, "the nobler hue,
And yours the statelier mien;
And, till a third surpasses you,
Let each be deemed a queen.

Let no mean jealousies pervert your mind,
A blemish in another's fame to find;
Be grateful for the gifts that you possess,
Nor deem a rival's merit makes yours less.

(William Cowper.)

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BEE

METHOUGHT I heard a butterfly
Say to a labouring bee:
"Thou hast no colours of the sky
On painted wings like me."

"Poor child of vanity! those dyes,
And colours bright and rare,"
With mild reproach, the bee replies,
"Are all beneath my care.

"Content I toil from morn to eve,
And scorning idleness,
To tribes of gaudy sloth I leave
The vanity of dress."

(William Lisle Bowles.)

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL

THE Mountain and the Squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter, "Little Prig:"
Bun replied—
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year,
And a sphere;
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place,
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I
And not half so sly;
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

(Ralph Waldo Emerson.)

SIX MEN OF INDOSTAN

IT was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined
Who went to see the Elephant

(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant
And, happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
“God bless me!—but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!”

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried “Ho! What have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me ’tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!”

The *Third* approached the animal,
And, happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:—
“I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant
Is very like a snake!”

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee;
“What most this wondrous beast is like,

Is mighty plain," quoth he;
" 'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The *Fifth* who chanced to touch the ear,
Said, "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so the men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL

So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance

Of what each other mean
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!
(John Godfrey Saxe.)

THREE BUGS

THREE little bugs in a basket,
And hardly room for *two*!
And one was yellow, and one was black,
And one like me, or you.
The space was small, no doubt, for all;
But what should *three* bugs do?

Three little bugs in a basket,
And hardly crumbs for two;
And all were selfish in their hearts,
The same as I or you;
So the strong ones said, "We will eat the bread,
And that is what we'll do."

Three little bugs in a basket,
And the beds but two would hold;
So they all three fell to quarrelling—
The white, and the black, and the gold;
And two of the bugs got under the rugs,
And *one* was left out in the cold!

So he that was left in the basket,
Without a crumb to chew,
Or a thread to wrap himself withal,
When the wind across him blew,
Pulled one of the rugs from one of the bugs;
And so the quarrel grew!

And so there was *war* in the basket,
Ah, pity 'tis, 'tis true!
But he that was frozen and starved at last
A strength from his weakness drew,
And pulled the rugs from *both* of the bugs,
And killed and *ate* them, too!

(Alice Cary.)

THE CHICKEN'S MISTAKE

A LITTLE chick one day
Asked leave to go on the water,
Where she saw a duck and her brood at play,
Swimming and splashing about her.

Indeed she began to peep and cry
When her mother wouldn't let her;
"If the ducks can swim there, why can't I?
Are they any bigger or better?"

Then the old hen answered: "Listen to me,
And hush your foolish talking;
Just look at your feet and you will see
They were only made for walking."

But chicky wistfully eyed the brook
And didn't half believe her,
For she seemed to say, by a knowing look,
Such stories couldn't deceive her.

And as her mother was scratching the ground,
She muttered, lower and lower,
"I know I can go there and not be drowned,
And so, I think, I'll show her."

Then she made a plunge where the stream was deep,
And saw, too late, her blunder,
For she had hardly time to peep;
When her foolish head went under.

And now I hope her fate will show
The child my story reading,
That those that are older sometimes know
What you will do well in heeding;

That each content in his place should dwell,
And envy not his brother;
For any part that is acted well,
Is just as good as another.

For we all have our proper sphere below,
And this is a truth worth knowing:
You will come to grief if you try to go
Where you were never made for going.

(*Phæbe Cary.*)

THE CROW'S CHILDREN

A HUNTSMAN, bearing his gun a-field,
Went whistling merrily,
When he heard the blackest of black crows
Call out from a withered tree:—

“You are going to kill the thievish birds,
And I would, if I were you;
But you must not touch my family,
Whatever else you do.”

“I’m only going to kill the birds
That are eating up my crop;
And if your young ones do such things,
Be sure they’ll have to stop.”

“O,” said the crow, “my children
Are the best ones ever born
There isn’t one among them all
Would steal a grain of corn.”

“But how shall I know which ones they are?
Do they resemble you?”
“O, no,” said the crow, “they’re the prettiest birds,
And the whitest, ever flew.”

So off went the sportsman whistling,
And off, too, went his gun;
And its startling echoes never ceased
Again till the day was done.

And the old crow sat untroubled,
Cawing away in her nook.
For she said; "He'll never kill my birds,
Since I told him how they look.

"Now there's the hawk, my neighbour,
She'll see what'll come to pass soon,
And that saucy, whistling black-bird
May have to change his tune."

When, lo! she saw the hunter
Taking his homeward track,
With a string of crows as long as his gun,
Hanging down his back.

"Alack, alack!" said the mother,
"What in the world have you done?
You promised to spare my pretty birds,
And you've killed them, every one."

"Your birds," said the puzzled hunter;
"Why, I found them in my corn;
And, besides, they are black and ugly
As any that ever were born."

"Now there is that hen,"
Said the cross little wren,
"I'm fed till she's fat as a drum;
While I strive and sweat
For each bug that I get,
And nobody gives me a crumb.
"I can't see for my life
Why the old farmer's wife
Treats her so much better than me.
Suppose on the ground
I hop carelessly round
For a while and just see what I'll see."

Said this cute little wren,
"I'll make friends with the hen,
And perhaps she will ask me to stay;
And then upon bread
Every day I'd be fed,
And life would be nothing but play."

So down flew the wren,
"Stop to tea," said the hen;
And soon biddy's supper was sent;
But scarce stopping to taste,
The poor bird left in haste
And this was the reason she went:

When the farmer's kind dame
To the poultry-yard came,
She said—and the wren shook with fright—

"Biddy's so fat she'll do
For a pie or a stew,
And I guess I shall kill her to-night."

(Phæbe Cary.)

THEY DIDN'T THINK

ONCE a trap was baited
With a piece of cheese;
It tickled so a little mouse
It almost made him sneeze;
An old rat said, "There's danger,
Be careful where you go!"
"Nonsense!" said the other,
"I don't think you know!"

So he walked in boldly—
Nobody in sight;
First he took a nibble,
Then he took a bite;
Close the trap together
Snapped as quick as wink,
Catching mousey fast there,
'Cause he didn't think.

Once a little turkey,
Fond of her own way,
Wouldn't ask the old ones

Where to go or stay;
She said, "I'm not a baby,
Here I am half-grown;
Surely I am big enough
To run about alone!"

Off she went, but somebody
Hiding saw her pass;
Soon like snow her feathers
Covered all the grass,
So she made a supper
For a sly young mink,
'Cause she was so headstrong
That she wouldn't think.

Once there was a robin,
Lived outside the door,
Who wanted to go inside
And hop upon the floor.
"Oh, no," said the mother,
"You must stay with me;
Little birds are safest
Sitting in a tree."

"I don't care," said Robin,
And gave his tail a fling,
"I don't think the old folks
Know quite everything."

Down he flew, and Kitty seized him
Before he'd time to blink
"Oh," he cried, "I'm sorry,
But I didn't think."

Now, my little children,
You who read this song,
Don't you see what trouble
Comes of thinking wrong?
And can't you take a warning
From their dreadful fate,
Who began their thinking
When it was too late?

Don't think there's always safety
Where no danger shows,
Don't suppose you know more
Than anybody knows;
But when you're warned of ruin,
Pause upon the brink,
And don't go under headlong
'Cause you didn't Think.

(Phæbe Cary.)

PART II

FRENCH FABLES

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FRENCH FABLES

DEATH AND THE WOODMAN

A WOODMAN poor, all covered with his load,
Beneath the weight of Faggots and of Years,
Groaning and bent, his double burden bears
Towards the misery of his mean Abode.
At length outworn with utmost weariness,
He lays him down; he dreams o'er his distress;
What pleasure has he had since life began?
Is there another such a wretched Man?
Sometimes no bread, and never perfect rest,
Crushed by home cares, by taxes sore oppressed,
By debt, the Soldiers and the toil enforced;¹
He deems his lot of mortal lots the worst.
He calls on Death. She comes without delay.
"You summoned me," she cries; "What is't you lack?"
"Only to help me lift upon my back
This burden here," he says, "nor longer stay."

¹ Labor imposed as a tax.

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. I, No. 16. Translated by Paul Hookham.*)

THE FOX AND THE STORK

ONCE Goodman Fox with great benevolence
Asked Gossip Stork to dine at his expense.
The fare was poor; in quantity not vast;

Our gallant, for the whole repast,
Produced a slender soup which—sad to state—
Was served upon an ordinary plate.
The Stork's long beak could hardly get a taste.
To be revenged upon this sinner,
The Stork in time invited him to dinner.
On such occasions it was not his way
To deal in vain excuses or delay;
The hour appointed came;
He scampered to the lodging of the dame
Who greeted him benignly.
The meal was cooked divinely;
His appetite was all a Fox's should be
Or could be.
The meat, cut up capriciously,
In little morsels, smelt deliciously.
But now—what puzzled much his wits—
Behold these dainty bits
Served in a long-necked Jar with outlet narrow.
Judge how it must his feeling harrow
To see the Stork's beak dodging in and out—
A thing impossible to Vulpine snout!
His hungry, homeward way he steers,
With tail between his legs, and drooping ears,
Feeling as much a victim
As if some common barn-door Fowl had tricked him!

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. I, No. 18. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE COCK AND THE PEARL

A COCK scratched up one day
A Pearl of purest ray
Which to a jeweller he bore,
"I think it fine," he said,
"But yet a crumb of bread
To me were worth a great deal more."

So did a dunce inherit
A manuscript of merit
Which to a publisher he bore,
" 'Tis good," he said, "I'm told,
Yet any coin of gold
To me were worth a great deal more."

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. I, No. 20. Translated by Elizur Wright, Jr.)

THE OAK AND THE REED

THE Oak one day said to the Reed,
"Good cause have you your hapless lot to mourn.
To you a clinging Wren's a load indeed;
The least wind that is born,
Ruffling the stream, bids you take heed
To make obeisance low;
While my proud top, for Caucasus a match,
The arrowy sun-shafts not content to catch,

Braves all the winds that blow.
All's storm to you, all Zephyr calm to me.
Yet if you had but sprung beneath the shade
My branching arms have made,
Such wrong there would not be;
I'd shelter you, though tempests did invade;
But you I ofttest find
On moist banks in the Kingdoms of the Wind!
Scant favour to your Race has Nature shown."
"Your pity," said the Plant, "I can but own
Kindly conceived. But give yourself no pain;
Such fears are vain;
Less dangerous are the winds to me than you.
I bend but break not. To this hour 'tis plain,
Since whole you stand, your mighty frame
Has served you to oppose
The utmost that these blusterers could do;
But mark the End." As these his words uprose,
A darkness o'er the horizon came;
Soon from that gathering frown
Sprang forth the fiercest Child
The North e'er nursed within his bosom wild;
The Tree holds firm; the Reed drops down.
With rage renewed sweeps on the Storm:
Lies low the giant form
Of him who reared his Heaven-neighbouring head
And whose feet touched the Empire of the Dead.
(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. I, No. 22. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE COUNCIL HELD BY THE RATS

OLD Rodilard, a certain Cat,
Such havoc with the Rats had made,
'Twas difficult to find a Rat
With nature's debt unpaid,
The few that did remain,
To leave their holes afraid,
From usual food abstain,
Not eating half their fill.
And wonder no one will,
That one who made on Rats his revel
With Rats passed, not as Cat but Devil.
Now, on a day, this dreaded Rat eater,
Who had a wife, went out to meet her;
And while he held his caterwauling
The unkill'd Rats, their chieftain calling,
Discussed the point in grave debate,
How they might shun impending fate.
Their Dean, a prudent Rat,
Thought best, and better soon than late,
To bell the Cat.
That when he took his hunting round,
The Rats, well cautioned by the sound,
Might hide in safety underground:
Indeed, he knew no other means,
And all the rest

At once confessed
Their minds were with the Dean's.
No better plan, they all believed,
Could possibly have been conceived;
No doubt, the thing would work right well,
If any one would hang the bell.
But, one by one, said every Rat,
"I'm not so big a fool as that."
The plan knocked up in this respect,
The council closed without effect,
And many a council have I seen
Of revered Chapter with its Dean,
That, thus resolving wisely,
Fell through like this precisely.

To argue or refute
Wise counsellors abound;
The man to execute
Is harder to be found.

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. II, No. 2. Translated by Elizur Wright.)

THE BAT AND THE TWO WEASELS

A BAT in his blind flight,
Rushed headlong into an old Weasel's hole,
Who hated Mice with all his heart and soul,
And straight made at him, furious at the sight.
"What! Have you dared to show your hateful face
Inside my house—

One of your mischievous, accursed race?
As sure as I'm a Weasel, you're a Mouse!"

"Spare me," said the trembling refugee.
"That really is not my vocation;
Some wretched slanderer, I plainly see,
Has wronged me in your estimation.
A Mouse?—Oh, dear, no! What? With wings, like me?
I am a Bird, I say,
Long live the feathered race, that skims the air!"

Such reasoning sounded fair;
Proof positive, it seemed, was there,
And the Bat went his way.

Some two days afterwards the stupid creature
Into a second Weasel's lodgings flew,
Who was at feud with all the feathered crew:
Again, by reason of his doubtful feature,
He found himself in peril of his life:

Rising to meet him, the Weasel's long-nosed Wife
Thought him a Bird, and was prepared to eat him.
Again he made his piteous protest heard:

"Oh, Madam, you're mistaken! I a Bird!
Why, you can't see!
What makes a Bird? Feathers, not fur, like me!
No—I'm a Mouse: Long live the Mice and Rats!
And Jove confound all Cats!"

So by his two-fold plea
The Trimmer kept his life and liberty.

THE FOX AND THE RAVEN

MASTER RAVEN sate perched on the top of a tree,
A cheese stuffed the beak of this sable marauder;
Allured by the smell, Master Fox came to see
What it was through the air spread so tempting an odour.
When thus he began: "Ah, Sir Ralph!—a good morning:
How charming you look, and how tasteful your dress!
These bright, glossy plumes, your fine person adorning,
Produce an effect which I cannot express.
Colours glaring and tawdry were never my choice;
When I view them, disgust is my only sensation:
If you join to that plumage a mellow-toned voice,
You're the Phoenix, I vow, of the feathered creation."
The Raven, cajoled, ope'd his beak of vast size,
To give his new friend a sweet sample of croaking;
In the jaws of sly Renard down dropped the rich prize;
Who then took his leave, with this lecture provoking:
"Honest Ralph, this conclusion the premises follows:
Give me leave your attention this maxim to press on;
He who flatters will cheat the vain blockhead who swallows.
At the price of a cheese 'tis a very cheap lesson."

The Raven, ashamed, swore a little too late,
Nevermore he'd be caught by so worthless a bait.

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. II, No. 15. Anonymous translation.*)

THE SAYING OF SOCRATES

ABOUT a home that Socrates was building
Arose discussion. None approved his plan:
The lack of moulding, panelling and gilding
Did little honour to so great a Man.

Then the façade was plain; and all
Agreed that the Apartments were too small.
To these objections, urged in courteous style,
Socrates answered with a placid smile:

“Such as it is, pray Heaven it be
Filled with true friends,” said he.

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. IV, No. 17. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE HARE'S EARS

IT chanced that some unruly horrid beast
Had gored the Lion King;
Who, hot with wrath at such a monstrous thing,
Vowed to secure himself henceforth at least,
And issued strict command,
All creatures that wore horns should quit his land.
Goats, Rams and Bulls decamped that very day;
The Stags sought change of air;
Of all his long- and short-horned subjects there,
None lost an hour in getting safe away.
The Hare, a timid creature,
Caught sight in shadow of his poor long Ears,

And grew distraught with fears
 Lest some might construe into horns that feature.
 He sought the Grasshopper, his country neighbour:
 "Adieu," said he, "my friend.
 I'm off at once: I feel that in the end,
 Under some false impeachment I shall labour:
 My Ears will count as horns, you may depend.
 Nay, even if I displayed 'em
 Short as an Ostrich, 'twould be all the same;
 Horns is their name!"
 "Horns!" quoth his friend,—"they're Ears, as Heaven made 'em;
 D'ye take me for a fool?"

"Horns they will be for all that," said the Hare,
 "Plain as a Unicorn's by this new rule;
 Protest nor prayer,
 If I'm clapt up in jail, will serve me there."

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. V, No. 4. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE COCK, THE CAT AND THE YOUNG MOUSE

APERT young Mouse to whom the world was new
 Had once a near escape, if all be true.
 He told his mother, as I need tell you:
 "I crossed the mountains that beyond us rise,
 And, journeying onwards, bore me
 As one who had a great career before me,
 When lo! two creatures met my wondering eyes—
 The one of gracious mien, benign and mild;

The other fierce and wild,
With high-pitched voice that filled me with alarm;
A lump of sanguine flesh grew on his head,
And with a kind of arm
He raised himself in air,
As if to hover there;
His tail was like a horseman's plume outspread."
(It was a farmyard Cock, you understand,
That our gay friend described in terms so grand,
As 'twere some marvel come from foreign land.)
"With arms raised high,
He beat his sides, and made such hideous cry,
That even I,
Brave as I am, thank Heaven! had wellnigh fainted:
Straightway I took to flight,
And cursed him left and right.
Ah! but for him, I might have got acquainted
With that sweet creature,
Who bore attractions in every feature:
A velvet skin he had, like yours and mine,
A tail so long and fine,
A sweet, meek countenance, a modest air—
Yet what an eye was there!
I feel that, on the whole,
He must have strong affinities of soul
With our great race—our ears are shaped the same.
I should have made my bow and asked his name,
But at the fearful cry
Roused by that monster, I was forced to fly."

"My child," replied his mother, "you have seen
That demure hypocrite we call a Cat:
Under that sleek and inoffensive mien
He bears a deadly hate of Mouse and Rat.
The other whom you fear, is harmless quite;
Nay, perhaps may serve us for a meal.
As for your friend, for all his innocent air,
We form the staple of his bill of fare."
Take, while you live this warning as your guide—
Don't judge by the outside.

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VI, No. 5. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE MULE WHO BOASTED OF HIS FAMILY

A BISHOP'S Mule made boast of his high birth;
Would talk forever of his mother's worth—
"My mother, who was once my lady's mare."
Much in her praise he told—
"She could do this,—and she had travelled there."
He almost thought that he deserved a place
By virtue of his race,
Among the great historic steeds of old,
And took it somewhat ill
That for a doctor's servant he was sold.
Grown old and poor, he had to turn a mill;
Then he remembered that, with all his pride,
He was a Donkey on his father's side.

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VI, No. 7. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

THE Tortoise had the boldness to declare
That for a Wager she would race the Hare.
The Hare pronounced it madness. "To restore
Your muddled wits," he said, "you ought to take
Two grains of clarifying Hellebore,
Gossip of mine." "Well, mad or not, I make
The Bet." The Bet was made; terms fixed; the whole
Amount agreed on placed beside the Goal.
The Umpire or the nature of the Stake
I know not: for the Distance—in four bounds
Our Hare had cleared it when, escaped the grip
Of panting Foes, he's given them all the slip
And doubling, set at fault the sorry Hounds.
Therefore to linger he was not afraid.
A moment sleeping, biting now a blade,
Round him a casual glance bestowing
Or listening which way the wind is blowing,
He leaves his Friend against old Time to race—
Who shuffles on at Senatorial pace
And, slowly hurrying, keeps the end in view.
He deigns not yet the Plodder to pursue,
Reflects what little glory is to get
Winning of such a rival such a Bet,
Considers it a point of honour due
Not till the latest moment to engage her.
Meanwhile he feeds, he dreams,

Muses on anything except the wager.
At last he sees she has almost
Attained the Winning-post:
Then like a flash across the grass he gleams.
In vain! His powers he has misreckoned
And comes in Second.
"The Stakes are mine, and who's fool now?" exclaimed
The Tortoise bold, with victory inflamed.
"My senses do I lack?
Such as I am, you see I've won;
How then would you have been outrun
If you had had a house upon your back!"

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VI, No. 10. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE SICK LION AND THE FOX

THE Lion once gave orders to proclaim
In the King's name,
That lying sick within his Cave,
Attacked by symptoms grave,
He called upon his Subjects to evince
Devotion to their suffering Prince:
Each Species should despatch a Deputation
By way of sympathy and consolation.
Therein he gave his promise to respect
The Envoys whom they should elect,
On faith of King that could admit no doubt;
And this was fairly written out,
As Passport good 'gainst tooth and claw,

A legal instrument without a flaw.
The Edict of the King was executed;
From various Species Spokesmen were deputed.
The Foxes all and some
Staying religiously at home
One of their Family explained the reason
Of what might have an air of treason:
"The footprints on the sand, "he said,
"Of those who have their visits paid
Towards the Cave present an obvious track,
But nothing in the shape of coming back:
This certainly seems rather queer
And gives our Race some grounds for fear.
Although the King perhaps would kindly use us,
In this affair he really must excuse us.
The Passport looks all right—but then—
I see in fact
With Certitude exact
How people get within the Den;
But how a single soul gets out again
Is not so plain."

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VI, No. 14. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE ANIMALS SICK WITH THE PLAGUE

ONE of those scourges which Heaven's righteous wrath
Invented for the crimes of Earth—
The Plague, if one must call
The visitation by its hideous name—

Down on the Animal world in fury came—
Death day by day to some, sore pain to all.
The love of life no more had power to move:
Food lost its relish; Wolf nor Fox
Prowled round the innocent flocks;
The Turtle-dove
Fled from its sickening mate; there was no love,
And therefore no more joy.
The Lion held council and spoke out:
"My friends," said he, "this pest the Gods employ
To punish our misdeeds, I make no doubt;
Wherefore it seems to me
'Twere fit the greatest sinner of us all
Should sacrifice himself in expiation,
So to avert Heaven's wrath, and save the Nation.
You that read history know that in such case,
These acts of self-devotion find their place.
Let each examine them, as truth compels,
Without equivocation,
The tale his several conscience tells,
And so make revelation.
As for myself I candidly confess
To satisfy my greediness
I have devoured Sheep not a few,
Who never did me harm,—nay, now and then
I ate the shepherd too.
I will devote myself, I say again,
If needful; but I think the rest are bound
To make a clean confession first, all round.

Our earnest wish, I hope and trust, is
The guiltiest should pay this debt of justice.”
“Sire,” said the Fox, “you have too good a heart—
Such scruples show it;
But, as for eating Sheep—why, for my part,
I see no sin in that—the stupid brutes!
You do them too much honour, if they knew it,
As for the shepherd, if your taste he suits,
Why, I can safely say, by Nation’s laws,
He well deserves to reap the righteous fruits
Of men’s preposterous claim to hold dominion
Over us free-born beasts. That’s my opinion.”
So spoke the Fox; and flatterers hummed applause.
It was not safe to probe too close the offences
Of the great nobles there,
Tiger or Bear,
Against whose life there might have been complaints;
All for their deeds found very fair pretences,
Down to the very Dogs that chased a Hare,
To hear them talk, they were four-footed saints.
The Ass in turn advanced to make confession:
“I mind me once,” said he,
When that the devil of hunger took possession
Of poor unhappy me,
I passed a grassy mead
Belonging to some monks, and in my need
(It was so tempting) I just took one bite—
A mouthful—I confess it was not right.”
All with one voice cried out upon the thief.

A Wolf, who had some smattering of law,
Against the prisoner straight took up his brief:
"A mangy, thick-skinned brute as e'er I saw!
From him, my lords, no doubt,
Has all this public misery come about:
Rank felony! To eat another's grass!"
Plainly, the righteous victim was the Ass:
No expiation short of death! And straight
The wretch went to his fate.

As you have power or weakness at your back
The Court whitewashes you, or brands you black.

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VII, No. 1. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE MILK-WOMAN AND HER PAIL

WITH Milk-pail deftly cushioned on her head,
High-kilted petticoat, shoes stout and strong,
The good Perrette
Fast towards the neighbouring town to market sped.
Dreaming no ill, lightly she stepped along,
Counted the price that she would surely get
For that fine Pail of milk, and cast about
How she should lay it out.
First, she would buy a hundred eggs, from which
Three broods at least would hatch; she should get rich,
By care and pains, no doubt.
"So very easy it will be," she thought,
To raise the Chickens by my cottage door;

And Master Fox, he must be sharp indeed,
If he don't leave enough of my fine breed
To buy one Pig at least—it may be more.
My Pig will soon get fat, at no expense—
He must be pretty forward when he's bought—
And if I sell him fairly, as I ought,
My gain will be immense.
Then what should hinder me from being able
(Things are so cheap just now)
To put a Cow and Calf into my stable?
Then, when they join the village herd,
How nice to see them skip,—my Calf and Cow!"
And at the word,
She gave three skips herself—the Milk-pail fell—
And so at once farewell
To Cow and Calf and Pig and Chickens that would sell!
The mistress of this visionary store
Cast one sad glance around
To where her ruined fortunes soaked the ground,
Then turned and bore
Her empty Pail back to her Husband's door;
He would meet all excuses with a curse,
And very probably with something worse.

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VII, No. 10. Translated by Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE COBBLER AND THE FINANCIER

A COBBLER gaily sang from morn till night,
He had a heart so light;
Bent o'er his work, he carolled through its stages,

Happier than any of the Seven Sages.
His neighbour, on the other hand, whose wealth
Imposed on him eternal watchfulness,
(This was a great Financier), lost his health,
Sang little and slept less.
At daybreak, if he fell into a doze,
The Cobbler's piping brought it to a close;
Until at last the poor Rich Man complained
That Providential Care
Had not made Sleep a saleable affair,
Like meat or drink or aught by Money gained.
He sent for him whose song
Had worn him out so long:
"Now tell me, Master Gregory," he cried,
"What do you make a year?" "My faith," replied
The Cobbler with a smile,
"It is not, Sir, my style
To count like that; I scarce can look ahead
From week to week enough, if without fear
Of actual want, I can get through the year:
Each day provides me bread."
"Well, well, what do you earn then by the day?"
"Now more, now less; the mischief of it is
(And decent would our gains be but for this),
There are so many days that we must lay
Our work aside; they ruin us with fêtes,
Saints' Days, that is:—and Master Parson prates
Of some new Saint in every Sermon now."
The Rich Man smiled at this simplicity.

He said: "The case is hard, I must allow;
Take you these hundred Crowns, and carefully
Keep them laid by against a time of dearth."
This glorious sum to the poor soul appears
The total treasure that the bounteous Earth
Has in a hundred years
Produced. The Man of Mirth
Goes home, and in his cellar buries deep
The Crowns,—and with them all his peace of mind.
No singing now; his one thought is to keep.
Securely that which troubles so Mankind.
Instead of his light sleep,
Dark fancies fill his breast,
Fears, false alarms, the tortures of unrest.
All day his eye is on the watch; all night
His ear is on the strain;
Suspensions rack his brain.
To save himself from going mad outright,
He runs to him his singing wakes no more:
"Ah, Sir," he cries, "my sleep, my songs restore
And take your Crowns again!"

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VIII, No. 2. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE RAT AND THE ELEPHANT

ONE day a Rat, the smallest of his race,
Observed a mighty Elephant pass by
With all his Equipage, at solemn pace.
Upon the Creature's back, three stories high,

A Sultan glorious,
His Dog, his Cat, his Ape,
His Parrot and his wife—in fact, his House
Goes journeying along:
While people stare and gape,
The Rat was much astonished that a throng
Should congregate this mass to gaze upon.
“What! Does mere bulk,” he says, “these fools impress?
As if to occupy more space or less
Were of TRUE GREATNESS the criterion!
What marvel in this awkward giant lies?
Are Children even frightened at his size?
I count myself, though little I may be,
Quite as important, morally, as he.”
Much more, equally sage,
He would have said, but for a slight event.
Just then the Sultan’s Cat
Sprang softly from her cage
And showed him, by one little argument,
The difference ’twixt an Elephant and Rat.

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. VIII, No. 15. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE MONKEY AND THE CAT

A N ape and cat, in roguery and fun
Sworn brothers twain, both owned a common master,
Whatever mischief in the house was done,
By Pug and Tom contrived was each disaster.
The feat performed, in chimney-corner snug,

With face demure, sat cunning Tom and Pug.

By Tom were mice and rats but rarely taken,
A duck or chicken better met his wishes;
More than the rats Tom gnawed the cheese and bacon;
’Twas Pug’s delight to break the china dishes,
And on the choicest viands oft a guttler,
Still made it seem the footman or the butler.

One winter’s day was seen this hopeful pair
Close to the kitchen-fire, as usual, posted.
Amongst the red-hot coals the cook with care
Had plac’d some nice plump chestnuts to be roasted,
From whence in smoke a pungent odour rose,
Whose oily fragrance struck the monkey’s nose.

“Tom!” says sly Pug: “pray could not you and I
Share this dessert the cook is pleased to cater?
Had I such claws as your’s, I’d quickly try:
Lend me a hand—’twill be a *coup-de-mâitre*!”
So said, he seized his colleague’s ready paw,
Pulled out the fruit, and crammed it in his jaw.

Now came the shining priestess of the fane,
And off in haste the two marauders scampered.
Tom for his share of the plunder had the pain,
Whilst Pug his palate with the dainties pampered.
Pug had the prize; Tom gained at least the learning,
That Pug loved nuts, and gave his friend the burning.

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. IX, No. 16. Anonymous translation.*)

THE KITE AND THE NIGHTINGALE

A VILLAIN Kite, whose Robber-life had spread
His fame around, and still the mischief grew,
Till all the neighbours heard his cry with dread,
And village children hooted as he flew,
Had seized at last a hapless Nightingale:
The Herald of the Spring, with piteous wail,
Begged hard for life. "Oh, gentle Robber, spare me!
I'm a poor meal for choice—

A wretched bird with little else but voice!

Don't tear me,

But rather hear me.

I'll sing of Tereus."—"Tereus? What was he?
Something to make a dainty dish for me?"

"Nay," said the bird, "he was a cruel king,

Whose evil love was my undoing;

List to the tuneful lay that I shall sing

Of his unholy wooing.

So sadly sweet, it charms each listening ear;

You, too, will be delighted when you hear."

"Truly," the Kite replied, "a likely thing!

A charming proposition!

I want a meal just now, not a musician!"

"Yet kings have heard me gladly."—"When a king
Has caught you," said the Kite, "then you can squall
For his amusement. I'm a Kite, you see;

Your music is ridiculous to me;
A hungry stomach has no ears at all."

(*La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. IX, No. 17. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE OLD MAN AND THE THREE YOUNG MEN

THREE Youths beheld with wondering eyes
A Man of Eighty planting Trees,
"To build were well, but at your age," said these,
"To plant is not so wise.

What good, in Heaven's name, can you devise
From such a task, unless indeed you live
To years by Patriarchs of old attained?

Why should your lees of life be strained
To furnish fruits that never can be yours?

Think only, you, of errors past;
Leave the high-soaring Hope, the Project vast,
To us the Young; of these the right is ours."
"It is not yours," the Old Man said. "The wine
Of Hope's precarious vintage mellows late,
Lasts little; and the withered hand of Fate
Juggles alike with Projects, yours and mine.
Our hold on life is equal—'tis so small:
For which of us may be the last to call
This general Light our own—the sunset hue
Or daybreak's soft betrayal into blue?
What single moment, as the moments speed
Assures that another will succeed?

Those who come after me will owe

To me the shade of Trees that here shall grow.
And must you then destroy
My only joy in life, another's joy?
That is a fruit which I can taste to-day
To-morrow taste perhaps,
Or e'en beyond the lapse
Of years; and I may see the dawnlight grey,
And the first beam that braves
The Earth's reluctant gloom, above your graves."
The Old Man reasoned well. One of the Three
Shipped to America, was lost at sea.
The second, hardly luckier than the first,
Inspired by thirst
For glory, on the field of battle quaffed
Instead Death's bitter draught,
The third engaged in peaceful husbandry,
And meeting thus the stroke of Destiny,
Fell from a tree he was about to graft.
The Greybeard mourned them. Vigorous yet and hale
He on their Monument engraved this Tale.

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. XI, No. 8. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE CAT AND THE TWO SPARROWS

A SPARROW and a Cat were bosom friends
Contemporaneous as to age,
Their infancy,—on which so much depends—
They passed together; side by side were laid

The Basket and the Cage.
The Sparrow often would provoke the Cat:
The one employed his beak; the other played
At fighting with his paws,
Giving at most a half correcting pat,
And taking care in that
To sheathe the malice of his steely claws.
The Sparrow, less restrained and circumspect,
His playmate sharply pecked.
Sir Cat, wise person and discreet,
With much forbearance these attacks would meet:
'Twixt Friends there's no occasion to give way
To spitefulness or temper's sway.
Used to each other from the dawn of life,
Long habit served but to increase
Between these two the bonds of peace;
Mock battle never turned to real strife;
When lo, there came upon the scene
A Sparrow of the neighbourhood, who tried
To make a third
In this fraternity of Cat and Bird.
A furious quarrel now arose between
The feathered Rivals. "What!" Sir Raton cried,
"This Upstart with my Comrade play the Turk?
This stranger Sparrow come to eat up ours?
Not so. Of him at least I'll make short work."
With that, the rash intruder he devours.
"Now, really," says the Cat, "I never guessed

The flavour of this species was so nice!"

Alas, to that peculiar zest

The other Sparrow fell a sacrifice!

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. XII, No. 2. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

CUPID AND FOLLY

DAN CUPID'S all a mystery—
His Arrows, Quiver, Torch and Infancy;
'Tis not the study of an hour
Can trace the secrets of his power;
Nor to unwind the tangle do I boast;
My humble Muse can tell at most
How the small God by chance unkind
Came to be blind.
Whether for men this proved a curse or blessing
Is matter for a Lover's guessing.

Love with Folly on a day
Passed in sport the time away;
He had not then in any wise
Lost the use of his bright eyes,
But a quarrel rose and Love
Would have moved the courts above
To settle it in legal fashion;
But Folly in a fit of passion
Dealt him a blow of such despite
As plunged his pretty eyes in night.
Venus raged to see the cruel

Blotting of each shattered jewel.
Wretched Mother! Loud her cries
Lament the loss of Cupid's eyes,
Deafen all the Gods with this.
Jupiter and Nemesis,
Hell's dread Judges—every one—
Hear the clamorous plaint; her Son
Through jeering crowds his way would pick
Nor go a step without a stick:
Vengeance for this should not be spared;
The damage too should be repaired.
When all her tale the Gods had learned,
They passed their sentence. Ne'er again
Must Love and Folly part. The twain
Must walk henceforth in Friendship's grove
And Folly be the Guide of Love.

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. XII, No. 14. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

THE ELEPHANT AND THE APE OF JUPITER

THE Elephant and Rhinoceros
Once on a time contended
For Sovereignty; they ended
By staking everything, for gain or loss,
On one decisive Combat in the lists.
A day for this they fixed, when news was brought
That some one had descried through cloudy mists
The Ape of Jupiter
Caduceus in hand, despatched, 'twas thought,

With Powers Terrestrial to confer.

This Ape, says history, bore the name of Gil.

The Elephant immediately concluded

That he was sent some mission to fulfil

Relating to the Contest; thus deluded

He waits on Gil, but finds him rather slow

In broaching what he has to say.

Sir Gil, however, in a formal way

Before his Majesty bows low.

His Majesty in expectation

Regards in mute inquiry the Legation.

But not a word. The interest he believed

The Gods must take in Quarrels such as his

Had no existence in the Sphere of Bliss;

No news of the affair had been received.

What matters it to Those on high

Whether an Elephant or gilded Fly

Battles? He must himself commence the theme.

"My Cousin Jupiter," he says,

"Will see in a few days

A glorious Combat from his Throne supreme,

And all his Court

Enjoy Celestial sport."

"What Combat?" says the Ape with knitted brow.

"What Combat? How?

Know you not that the biggest of the Brutes,

Myself excepted, with myself disputes;

That Elephantopolis

Is going to war with great Rhinoceropopolis,

Kingdoms, I think, not quite unknown to Fame."

"Truly I never heard the name
Of either place, that I can call to mind,"
Replies Sir Gil; "the fact is,
In Heaven 'tis not our practise
To pay much heed to matters of that kind."
Abashed and mortified,
The Elephant conceals his wounded pride.
"What then," says he, "your presence here invites?"

"I came," Gil answers, "to install
Two Ants in their just rights
As to a Blade of Grass they seek to share,
Our Providence takes thought for all:
No Earthly Power can shake its even hand,
Its equal current stem;
And as to your affair,
The Gods but weigh it as a grain of sand
For small is great and great is small with Them."

(La Fontaine, Fables, Vol. XII, No. 21. Translated by Paul Hookham.)

MADAM SAGE AND MADAM TEA

FAR out at sea
A Cargo of dried Sage met Madam Tea,
Sailing for France from China. "Ah, good day,
And whither bound, fair foreigner, I pray?"
"Europe, of course, my dear; I'm quite the rage
With all its population, low or high:

But pray, Madam Sage,
Where are *you* bound."—"Oh, China!"—"Really!—why?"
"I love the country—as I ought, indeed—
They know my value there;
At home they treat me almost like a weed:
Thank Heaven, the wind is fair—
China's the place where merit makes its way;
I'm going there—good day!"

(Antoine François le Bailly, *Fables Nouvelles*. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE CLOCK AND THE SUN-DIAL

A PERT young Clock began to shout
(He was just set up) to the Dial below—
"Well, what's the hour? I can't find out
From you." The Dial said—"I don't know."
"Then what's the use of your Dial-ship, pray,
If you can't tell folks the time of day?"
"I wait," said he, "for the Sun to shine;
Knowledge of time is his, not mine."
"Wait if you will," said the Clock, "but I
Have nothing to do with the Sun;
Just a turn of the hand, come once a week,
Is all the help that I ever seek
To keep me going—so perfectly
My hands in their courses run.
Hark! I'm going to strike—now listen to me—
One—two—three—four! That's just the time."

And, as the Clock beat out his chime
The Sun came forth in his brilliancy;
The clouds and shadows dispersed apace,
And the light shone full on the Dial's face,
It marked the time—'twas nearly five;
"My child," said the Dial, "you want repair;
You've always an answer ready to give,
But those who trust you will badly fare;
Take pattern from me, good youth;
When I don't see clear, I say I don't know,
I speak but little—you call me slow—
But what I speak is truth."

(*Houdard de La Motte, Fables, Book III, No. 2. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

HONOUR, FIRE AND WATER

ONCE upon a time Honour, Fire and Water set out to travel in company. As it was to be an expedition of pleasure and discovery, they foresaw the possibility of their getting separated on the road, and made arrangement by which, in such case, they might be sure of meeting again. Fire explained, that although in general he was visible enough, yet sometimes he was concealed from view. "But even if you miss my light," he said, "whenever you see smoke you will be sure to find me." Water also instructed his friends as to certain marks by which his whereabouts could be readily ascertained—where the herbage was greenest, and the evening mists rose in the air. It remained for Honour to give his companions some clew of the same kind. But he confessed, with a sigh, that the only charge

he could give them was to keep him constantly in view, and never lose sight of him at all. "Watch me," he said, "with the eyes of Argus; for if once you lose me, you will never find me more."

(From the French of Etienne Pavillon. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE SNAKE AND THE HEDGEHOG

SOON as he felt the winter frosts begin,
A Hedgehog begged a Snake to take him in:
" 'Twill be a deed of charity," said he:—
"I'm perishing with cold, as you may see;
And then
In this great hole how lonely you will be,
All by yourself, till summer comes again!
So take me under cover—
I'm first-rate company, as you'll discover."
The Snake consented,
And very soon repented.
The Hedgehog proved a most unpleasant guest;
Curled himself up into a horrid ball,
Rolled here and there, with no regard at all
For his poor hostess, who could get no rest,
And even pricked her side
With those sharp-pointed quills upon his hide.
Vainly she made complaint:—
It was the brute's amusement so to do;
Such conduct would provoke a saint.
At last she said: "Behave yourself, or go!"
"Go!" said the brute, "Not I! I'm here at present,

And here I'll stay:
Go out yourself, if you find things unpleasant! "

In a companion one may find a master.
A solitary life is dull, you say;
Life with a Hedgehog is a worse disaster.
(*Henri Richer, Fables. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE ASS AND THE HORSE

A N Ape, past master in the graphic arts,
Had finished a great picture—something new;
The Animals, invited from all parts
Came to a private view.
His work the artist to their taste submitted;
It was a Horse—"Superb!" they all admitted,—
"Nature," they said, "has found a rival here!"
"Humph!" said the Ass—"to me that's not so clear.
Our friend has done a clever thing, of course,
But to my humble judgment it appears
That to have perfect symmetry, that Horse
Should have had longer ears."

(*Ansoine François le Bailly, Fables Nouvelles. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE APES AND THE LEOPARD

A LITTLE band of gamesome Apes, one day,
Met in the woods to play.
The game was this: one had to hide his face

Within a comrade's lap, while on his back
He stretched his paw out for the rest to smack;
Then he must guess who struck; and, in such case,
 Guessed wrong of course.
Then they all grinned and screamed till they were hoarse.
 Attracted to the sound,
A smart young Leopard sallied from his lair,
 And with a gracious air
 Bowed most politely round.
All trembled at his presence. "Pray," said he,
"Don't be alarmed; I'm a good-natured beast—
 Don't stop for me—
I would not interrupt you in the least:
 Nay, I've come here to-day
 Quite in a friendly way,
To join your sports myself; so pray go on,
 And I'll make one."
"Oh, Monseigneur! Your Highness is too good!
What! join in these rude sports with such as we?"
"Well, 'tis my whim—just now I'm in the mood;
Besides, my Highness takes a philosophic view
 As to the rights of animals—don't you?
I go in for equality, you see;
Come—let's begin."
The Apes, delighted, listened fast enough
(As fools will always listen to such stuff)
 And with a general grin,
 Took it all in.
So the blindfolded Ape held out his paw;

The Leopard smote—beneath the princely claw
Out sprang the blood. This time there was no doubt;

The poor Ape guessed who struck,
But held his tongue, limped off and cursed his luck.
His comrades feigned a laugh; the prince laughed out.

So, one by one,
The Apes made their excuses and were gone,
But muttered to themselves upon the way:
“Such games with princes are not safe to play:
Under the velvet paw,
Smooth as it looks, there always lurks a claw.”

(Florian, Fables, Vol. III, No. 1. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE RHINOCEROS AND THE DROMEDARY

A STRONG young Rhinoceros said one day to a Dromedary, “Please explain, my dear brother, why it is that fate treats me and my kind so unfairly! That creature called Man, whose strength all lies in his cleverness, seeks your companionship, houses you, cares for you, shares his own bread with you and thinks himself the richer so fast as your number increases. Of course I know that you lend your back to carry his burdens, his wife and children; I admit willingly that you are swift-footed, gentle, steady and indefatigable;—but the Rhinoceros is capable of the same virtues. I even think, if I may speak without offence, that the advantage is all on our side. Our horn and our thick skin would be of good service in battle. Nevertheless, Man hunts us down, despises us and hates us, forces us to flee from him.”

“My friend,” replied the Dromedary, “do not be envious of our

lot. It is easy enough to serve Man, the hard task is to please him. You wonder why he prefers us to you; but here is the secret of this preference: we Dromedaries have learned to bend the knee."

(*Florian, Fables, Vol. III, No. 4.*)

THE PEACOCK, THE GEESE AND THE DIVER

HIS jewelled tail a Peacock was displaying;
Admiring Birds their compliments were paying
While from the neighbouring mere
Two Geese turned up their noses with a sneer:
They noted only his defects. Said one,
"What hideous feet! What legs to stand upon!"
"And then his voice!"
Remarked the other. "Of the two, for choice,
I think the Screech-Owl has the best of it!"
And each laughed loudly at the other's wit.
Up jumped a Diver: "Gentlemen," said he,
"You have discerning eyes:
Full three miles off that Bird's defects you see;
But let me tell you this:—
You have a voice and legs far worse than his,
Without his brilliant dyes."

(*Florian, Fables, Vol. III, No. 16.*)

THE CONFIDENT PARROT

IT will be nothing"—so the thoughtless cry,
What time the storm hangs threatening in the sky;
"Why vex ourselves before the evil day?"

A stout Sea-Captain once, who knew no fears,
But lacked the prudence that became his years,

Resolved to put to sea:

What though the wind was high, the skies were wild,

Little recked he;

Vain was the Pilot's warning;

Still came the same reply, all danger scorning—

"It will be nothing"—and the Captain smiled.

A Parrot sat on board,

And caught the refrain of the Captain's word;

And all the while the good ship rushed ahead

"It will be nothing," still the Parrot said.

Long time by adverse winds the barque was tossed;

The course was lost;

At last they lay becalmed; short store of bread,

No land in sight, all hearts disquieted.

The Captain spoke no word;

"It will be nothing," still repeats the Bird.

And day by day the measured food ran short,

Till, as a last resort

(The crew were starving and no help was nigh),

Even the sailors' pets,

Macaws and Parroquets,

To still their hunger, all were doomed to die.

Sadly the Parrot sat and drooped his head;

"It will be nothing," feebly still he said.

Meanwhile his cage stood open on the deck—

He might have saved himself if he had tried;

At last they wrung his neck;
"It—will—be—nothing!" he gasped and died.

(*Florian, Fables, Vol. III, No. 19. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.*)

THE CRITICAL PARROT

AN old grey Parrot from his cage had flown,
And fixed his quarters in a neighbouring wood;
And there he sat, affecting quite the tone
Of modern connoisseurs, as nearly as he could,
And criticised with supercilious air
Each bird that warbled there.
Even the Nightingale's enchanting song
He found too long:
Besides her cadences were sometimes wrong.
As for the Linnet,
Her style was poor—there was no science in it,
Besides her voice was waning.
The Lark—well possibly, when she was young,
Had she enjoyed the advantage of his training
She might have sung.
In short, no bird could please him: when they chaunted,
He hissed so loud that they all stopped, quite daunted.
Tired out with such affronts, the birds one day
Approached him in a body. "Sir," said they,
"You always hiss and mercilessly flout
These poor attempts of ours;
You have a splendid voice yourself, no doubt;
For our instruction, just for once display

Your own superior powers."

The critic was embarrassed—scratched his head—

And slowly said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the fact is this;

I don't sing much,—but I know how to hiss."

(Florian, Fables, Book IV, No. 3. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE TWO BALD MEN

ONE day two Bald Men simultaneously discovered a piece of ivory gleaming brightly in a dark corner. They both sprang forward to pick it up. A quarrel followed, beginning with words and ending with blows. The victor lost, as might well be expected, the few grey hairs that he still possessed. The coveted treasure which he got as the prize of his victory was—an ivory comb.

(Florian, Fables, Vol. IV, No. 16.)

THE FLYING-FISH

A YOUNG Flying-fish, discontented with his lot, said one day to his aged grandmother: "I don't know what I am going to do to escape death. Every time that I rise into the air I dread the claws of the sea-eagles; and when I plunge into the depths of the sea, the sharks attack me."

The older Fish replied: "My child, in this world if you are neither an eagle nor a shark you must quietly follow a narrow path, swimming high near the air, and flying low near the water."

(Florian, Fables, Vol. V, No. 20.)

THE SILKWORM

TALKING among themselves one day,
The Animals, each in their different way
The Silkworm's skill were praising:
"How wonderous fine
She spins her thread! Such talent is divine!
And then the price they fetch is quite amazing!"
Only the Spider had some fault to find;
She showed a critic's view,
Putting in "Ifs" and "Buts" and not a few
Remarks that seemed to them quite out of season.
"Sirs," said the Fox, "you understand the reason?
Madam spins too."

(Florian, Fables, Vol. V, No. 12. Translated by the Rev. Wm. Lucas Collins.)

THE CAT AND THE LOOKING-GLASS

A CAT, perceiving a looking-glass on a lady's toilette-table, jumped up to examine it; but was struck with astonishment at perceiving, as he thought, one of his brethren, in a threatening attitude! Our Puss wishing to join company, finds himself stopped. Surprised, he concludes the glass to be transparent, and goes to the other side, finds nothing, returns, and again the intruder is before him. After a little reflection, lest the other should escape while he walks round the glass, he perches himself astride on the top, with one paw on either side, so that he can seize in any direction. Making sure of his prey, he inclines his head gently towards the glass, and

catches sight of an ear, then of two. Instantly darting his claws to the right and left, he loses his equilibrium, falls, and has caught nothing. Without waiting any longer to find out that which he cannot comprehend, he forsakes the looking-glass, saying: "What do I care about penetrating this mystery? I had better return to the kitchen, and catch a mouse for dinner."

(*Florian, Fables. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.*)

THE ELEPHANTS AND THEIR MASTERS

WITHIN Golconda's rich domain,
The royal elephants to train—

To be their tutor, is a post
All aim at, and are proud to boast.

An alien once to this was named;
And deeply was the measure blamed,
But still in murmured talk, for there
The injured must in silence bear,
Or right or wrong, the king's behest:
Submission there is ever best.

This stranger by the prince preferred,
Was of the base jack-pudding herd,
Who dance on ropes, or spin a sieve
By sorcery, as the clowns believe.
The juggler had from Europe brought
A dog so singularly taught,
So perfect in acquired lore,
His like had ne'er been seen before.
The prince, perceiving how the rogue,

With skilful care had trained his dog,
Judged he would better still succeed
With creatures of a nobler breed;
And now the elephantine band
Are trusted to the juggler's hand,
The sum of whose scholastic course
Was beating, starving, fear and force.
The whole he tried—but tried in vain;
A wretched end was all his gain.
The elephants, a generous race,
Scorn to submit to treatment base;
The master storms—their fury boils;
One round him his proboscis coils,
Whirls him through air in direful heat,
And tramples him beneath his feet.
This done; the elephants avenged,
From rage again to mildness changed.

An Indian next the charge obtained,
Whose kind respect their duty gained:
For kind respect was all his art;
And 'twas enough—it won the heart.
The docile troop behind him trod,
Obeyed his glance, and watched his nod.

The prince from thence a lesson took;
And, better than by many a book,
Was taught the sole successful art
Of governing a generous heart.

(Nivernois, Fables. Cadell translation.)

THE BIRDS OF PASSAGE

THE vintage o'er, unnumber'd troops
Cleaving the air in buoyant groups,
Of birds of passage, richly fed
Within our orchards, homeward sped.
Accomplish'd now the tedious flight,
They at their capital alight;
Where every eye, with flouting gaze,
The bold adventurers surveys.
Acquaintance, kindred, sire, and son,
Flick'ring and hopping, round them run:
And soon the crowd, from rudely peering,
With envious murmurs fall to sneering:—
“How sleek,” they cry, “our travellers grow!
What health and bloom their aspects shew;
With stomachs thus so amply stor'd,
They may a longer fast afford.
Sure, when they took their flight in May,
They were as lank as we today.
This shews what sudden gain must rise
From trips to man's more clement skies.”
The leader of the birds of flight
Returns; “So far, my friends, you're right:
Abroad, both grain and fruits abound,
And plenteous refuse there is found:
But to return unhurt, to shun

The storm, the snare, the deadly gun—
Here lies the hazard. Be so kind,
My gentle friends, to call in mind,
How many left this shore in May;
Then count the number here today.
By calculation thus alone
The profits of the journey's known."

(Nivernois, Fables. Cadell translation.)

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BEE

ALL day long, from early morning, a Bee clung to a stalk of wild thyme, feasting on its nectar. A Butterfly, flitting from flower to flower and constantly changing her fickle mind and her pasturage, met the Bee on her homeward way in the evening.

"Bless me!" said the Butterfly, "you are a faithful soul or else a very stupid one, to single out just one flower and devote the whole day to it,—all day long the same, same flower! Oh, my poor dear, when I saw you clinging to that wild thyme stalk from early morning until sun-down, I tell you frankly, I thought of nothing in the world but an Oyster sadly glued to a rock, without ever being able to change its home!"

"You are perfectly right," replied the Bee, "and I like the comparison, for it suits us Bees admirably. We have no desire to imitate the idle pleasures of you Butterflies. We are satisfied to be useful; and that is what Nature designed us for. Those Oysters, sadly bound to a rock, produce pearls, and we Bees, well, we make honey."

(Nivernois, Fables, Vol. II, No. 7.)

PART III

SPANISH FABLES

PART III

SPANISH FABLES

THE ASS AND THE FLUTE

YOU must know that this ditty,
This little romance,
Be it dull, be it witty,
Arose from mere chance.

Near a certain enclosure,
Not far from my manse,
An Ass with composure
Was browsing by chance.

As he went along prying,
With sober advance,
A shepherd's Flute lying
He found there by chance.

Our amateur started,
And eyed it askance,
Drew nearer and snorted
Upon it by chance.

The breath of the brute, Sir,
Drew music for once;
It entered the Flute, Sir,
And blew it by chance.

"Ah!" cried he in wonder,
"How comes this to pass?
Who will now dare to slander
The skill of an Ass?"

And Asses in plenty,
I see at a glance
Will, one time in twenty,
Succeed by mere chance.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated by T. Roscoe.)

THE BEAR AND THE MONKEY

A BEAR, with whom a Piedmontese
Joined company, to earn their bread,
Essayed on half his legs to please
The public, where his master led.

With looks that boldly claimed applause,
He asked the Ape, "Sir, what think you?"
The Ape was skilled in dancing-laws
And answered, "It will never do!"

"You judge the matter wrong, my friend,"
Bruin rejoined, "You are not civil!
Were these legs given for you to mend
The ease and grace with which they swivel?"

It chanced a pig was standing by:
"Bravo! astonishing! encore!"
Exclaimed the critic of the sty,
"Such dancing we shall see no more!"

Poor Bruin, when he heard the sentence,
Began an inward calculation;
Then, with a face that spoke repentance,
Expressed aloud his meditation:—

"When the sly Monkey called me dunce,
I entertained some slight misgiving;
But, Pig, thy praise has proved at once
That dancing will not earn my living!"

Let every candidate for fame
Rely upon this wholesome rule:—
Your work is bad, if wise men blame,
But worse, if lauded by a fool.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated by T. Roscoe.)

THE CATHEDRAL BELL AND THE HERMITAGE BELL

WITHIN an old Cathedral hung
A mighty Bell,
Which never, save at Easter, swung
One solemn knell;
And then so sternly all around
Its echoes fell,

The peasants trembled at the sound
Of that big Bell.

Not far from the Cathedral stood
A Hermit's Cell,
And in its belfrey-tower of wood
A little Bell;
Whose daily tinkling through the year
So faintly fell,
The peasants hardly gave an ear
To that small Bell.

The Hermit—he who owned the same,
And loved it well,
Resolved that it should share the fame
Of the big Bell;
So tolling it but once a year,
With one brief knell
He taught the peasants to revere
His little Bell.

And there are fools in vast repute
Who, strange to tell,
Acquire their fame by being mute
Like that small Bell;
These would-be sages rarely speak,
For they know well
That frequent utterance would break
The solemn spell.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated from the Spanish for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE IVY AND THE THYME

I 'VE sometime read, I know not where,—
For mem'ry's treacherous, all declare!—
With many a joke in doggerel rhyme,
The Ivy mocked the lowly Thyme,
Because he seldom reared his head,
But grew ignobly near a shed:
"Friend," said the Vine, "how comes it so?
Your thoughts are so debased and low?
For though your humble form can boast
The odours of Arabia's coast,
Of all the plants that grow around,
You are the nearest to the ground."—
"Friend," said the Thyme, "to gain the skies
I never wish like you to rise.
I lead an independent life,
Remote from care, unknown to strife,
Nor from another's aid profess
To owe the comforts I possess—
But, Oh! how changed your lot to mine
Should what you rest on e'er decline;
If yonder rude majestic Oak
Should fall beneath the woodman's stroke,
Or that vast tower to which you trust
Be crumbled into native dust,

Their ruin will involve your doom,
And I'll be left to shade your tomb."

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Adapted from the translation by John Balfour.)

THE SWORD AND THE SPIT

A SWORD, in famed Toledo wrought,
That, tempered well, had nobly fought
In many a broil, and chieftains slain,
In various skirmishes in Spain;
From sire to son that long had passed,
Was doomed to feel disgrace at last!
Condemned, its owner in a jail,
To be exposed to public sale!
Thus, though oft drawn, by fate's command,
By many a firm and doughty hand,
It passed, by purchase in a lot,
To one its worth who valued not,
An honest quaker, mild of mien,
With whom it dwelt for months, unseen.

But, lo! it chanced one winter's night,
Anxious his kindred to delight,
Some game he ordered to be dressed,
And, as his spouse no spit possessed,
She, without any more ado,
Ran with the sword the lev'ret through,
And by a casual stroke of wit
The sword converted to a spit.

Now while this transmutation passed,
A new-made lord required in haste

A sword to dangle by his side,
And shew at once his rank and pride.
The wily cutler, who well knew
’Twas meant alone to strike the view,
And that if fine the hilt were made,
The peer would little heed the blade,
Begged a few days in toil to spend,
And he would home the weapon send.—

Meanwhile he searched his kitchen round,
And soon a spit neglected found,
That straight he polished, filed, and gilt,
And on it placed a splendid hilt,
And this, well-sheathed, he sent my lord,
And swore that, on a trader’s word,
In all Toledo’s city he
A finer sword would never see!
So well he spoke, that in a trice
The silly peer paid down the price,
Which rendered one as vile a cheat,
As was the other’s folly great.

’Tis thus translators, servile wits,
Turn spits to swords, and swords to spits.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated by John Balfour.)

THE GOOSE AND THE GOLDFINCH

A GOOSE, with other poultry fed,
Inhabiting a farm-yard shed;
So vile a bird was never seen,
Her nest was litter’d and unclean:

If she had eggs, 'twould sure befall
She'd overlay and smash them all:
Or, if she ever hatched a brood,
She let them die for want of food:
Besides all this, from morn till night
She ate with monstrous appetite,
And yet, for all her stuffing in,
She still was naught but bone and skin:
To sell her for the smallest gain,
The farmer having tried in vain—
For none to buy a bird was willing,
That was not even worth the killing—
He turned her out, one dreary night,
To seek her fortune as she might.

The Goose, ere long, began to feel
The want of her accustom'd meal,
When, as she wander'd on, she heard
The voice of a melodious bird,
Who, with some others, sang a lay
In honour of the dawning day.
"Ha," mused the Goose, "the thought will do—
Why should not I turn singer too?
No doubt my voice is sweet enough,
And art and science are all stuff!"
Waddling to where the songster stood,
She'd sing all day, she said, for food;
Spoke of her lovely voice, and then
Gave a long hiss, as specimen.
A sober Goldfinch was at hand,

Who on that day had led the band:
"Fool that thou art," he said, "to think
Upon such terms to eat and drink.
What!—thou—a Goose in ev'rything—
Dare to presume with us to sing,
Why there's no art, be what it will,
Demands such genius and skill.
Leave us to sing alone, I pray,
And seek thy food some other way."

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated by John Balfour.)

THE ANT AND THE FLEA

THE Ant once showed the Flea, her neighbour,
The results of all her toil and labour;
The whole construction of her dwelling,
Explaining every part and telling
The uses of each separate story;
The granary—the dormitory—
Showed how a task which numbers share
Made easy heaviest loads to bear.

The Flea, to all this information,
Vouchsafed no other observation
Than sentences like these:—"Ha—so—
I understand—of course—I know—
I see—'tis clear—quite obvious that—
I don't see much to wonder at."

"Then," said the Ant, "I wish you'd come
With me, my friend, and in our home,

For our advantage, let us see
A proof of your proficiency.
You speak in such a master-tone,
"Twill be no sooner said than done."

The Flea with impudence unshamed,
Cut a light caper and exclaim'd,
"Surely you do not mean to doubt
My skill to work such trifles out;
'Tis but t' apply one's-self—but stay—
I am busy now—another day."

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Adapted from translation by John Balfour.)

THE MOUSE AND THE CAT

A MOUSE one evening, as it stole
In quest of plunder from its hole,
Exclaimed aloud (for Mice could speak
Of yore, though now they only squeak),
"What virtue is more lovely than
Fidelity in brute or man?
The Dog, who guards his master's store,
And drives the robber from the door,
Deserves the praise of every Mouse
That has an interest in the house!"

A Cat replied, "Thy praise should be
Bestowed as readily on me;
For, like the Dog, and with a zeal

As watchful for my master's weal,
Throughout the night I keep aloof
A host of robbers from his roof,
And guard from thee and thine the hoard
Of dainties that should crown his board."

On this the Mouse withdrew again
Into its hole, and answered then:
"Henceforth, since *thou* art faithful, Mice
Shall call fidelity a vice."

'Tis ever thus, for we commend
The smallest virtues in a friend;
While in a foe we should abhor it
And even damn the fellow for it.

(*Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.*)

THE SWAN AND THE LINNET

AS once a Linnet on a tree
Was piping like a lover's lute,
A Swan exclaimed, "All birds should be,
When I am nigh, entranced and mute;
For none can hope to vie with me,
A vocalist of such repute!

"It heeds me not, but warbles still—
Was ever songster half so vain?

The creature, with its tiresome trill,
May thank its stars that I disdain
To open my melodious bill,
And pour an overpowering strain!

"For if, as poets truly tell,
My very death-notes are divine,
My voice, of course, when I am well,
Is still more exquisitely fine,
And I could readily excel
That simple song by one of mine."

"I grant thy fame in former years,"
The Linnet answered, "but as thou
Art never heard by modern ears,
Thy song is deemed a fiction now,
And, like the music of the spheres,
A tale which moderns disallow.

"But give me, sweet one, I beseech,
A sample of that olden lay."
The Swan, too flattered by that speech,
To answer with a churlish nay,
Began to sing—but gave a screech;
The Linnet laughed and flew away.

Thus many a coxcomb with a name
For talents which he ne'er possessed,

On turning author, finds his fame
Unequal to the trying test,
And like the Swan, exposed to shame,
Becomes a byword and a jest.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE SILKWORM AND THE SPIDER

ONE day, as a Silkworm slowly spun
Its delicate threads in the noon-tide sun,
A Spider cried, from its darksome nook:
"Look at my web, sweet sister, look!
I began it at dawn, 'tis hardly noon,
And yet my task will be ended soon;
For while thou spinnest thy life away,
I weave a web in a single day.
Examine it well, each airy line
Is as fine and fair as the best of thine."
"True," said the Silkworm, with a smile,
"But will they endure for half the while?"

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE TWO RABBITS

WITH a ravenous pack of Dogs at his back,
A Rabbit fled—or flew;
For his course was as fleet as if his four feet
Were winged, like Mercury's two.

Away, away, in wild dismay,
He flew with all his might;
And his joy was vast, when he reached at last
A warren in his flight.

But ere he stole into his hole,
Secure from further fear,
A comrade, who spied the trembler, cried,
"What is amiss, my dear?"

"What is amiss? Why, simply this,"
He answered with panting breath,
"Those Greyhounds,—see?—have been chasing me,
Till I'm nearly run to death."

"Where, where?—But hark! I hear the bark
Of dogs upon your track;
But in faith you err, for there's not, good sir,
A Greyhound in the pack."

"Not a Greyhound?"—"No, for really, though
The difference is but small,
I see them now, and the Dogs, I vow,
Are Beagles, one and all."

"What! Beagles? Pshaw! the Dogs that I saw
Were Greyhounds, I'll be bail;

I am not blind, I know what kind
Of Dogs were at my tail."

"Why, but for your fright, no doubt you might
Have known with half an eye."
"I tell you, zounds, that they're all Greyhounds,
As much as you or I."

While words ran high, the Dogs came nigh
And nigher in pursuit,
Till unaware, they fell on the pair,
And settled the dispute.

Some authors discuss a question thus,
And like this foolish pair,
Expose their life in wordy strife
On trifles light as air.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE FROG AND THE FROGLING

FROM their dwelling in a bog,
Cried a Frogling to a Frog:
"Mother, see on yonder banks,
How the canes, in even ranks,
Lift their leafy heads on high,
Till they seem to touch the sky.
Tell me, have you ever seen

Any trees so tall and green—
Any that in stalk or stem
Would deserve to vie with them?"

But the words had hardly passed,
When an unexpected blast
Rushed and with a mighty blow
Struck the grove and laid it low.

Then, retorting from the bog,
To the Frogling said the Frog:
"Look, my child—a child may gain
Wisdom even from a cane—
Look and learn no more to prize
Objects for their gloss and size.
For each trunk that seemed to thee
Massive as a forest tree
Is as empty, frail and thin
As the vilest weed, within."

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE OWL

AN Owl one morn—but sooth to say,
I am not telling it aright;
For Owls are birds that love to stay
Within their secret homes by day,
And only fly by night,—

An Owl one night profanely flew
Into a church and chanced to see
A lamp or lantern—but the two
Are much alike, and one will do,
Whichever it might be.

And yet, methinks, anent the pair,
It was, if I remember well,
A lamp: but whether round or square,
Or made of glass or earthenware,
Is more than I can tell.

But there it hung, in pious proof
Of Catholicity, before
The Virgin's shrine—a thing aloof,
Just ninety feet below the roof
And nine above the floor.

The Owl, who felt at such a sight
His appetite for oil arise,
Swooped boldly towards it, but the light,
Alack! was too intensely bright,
And scorched his lidless eyes.

So, reeling backwards in despair,
He muttered, as he left the shrine,
“Oh, but for this terrific glare,
How gloriously would I fare
Upon that oil of thine!

"But trust me, Lamp, though now I flee,
If ever I shall chance to find
Thy flame extinct—with fearless glee
I'll glut my thirsty beak in thee,
Nor leave a drop behind."

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE GOAT AND THE HORSE

A GOAT with feet that danced and head that swayed
In modulated measure to the sound
Of a sweet violin, which, deftly played,
Awoke the blandest echoes all around,
Had listened long, when, with an air of pride
He thus addressed a Horse which stood beside:

"These chords which speak so well, my humble friend,
Were borrowed from the bowels of a Goat;
And even I, when life is at an end,
May still survive to be a thing of *note*;
For then some artist of harmonic skill
Shall twist my tripe into as sweet a trill."

The Horse, as if in laughter, neighed aloud,
And answered thus: "Poor wretch! of what avail
Would be the simple chords which make thee proud,
Unless I had supplied them, from my tail,
With many a hair to form the fiddle-bow,
Whose movements make the hidden music flow?"

"And though the loss may pain me, I'm content;
For, after all, it gladdens me to see,
While I am still alive, the instrument
Indebted for its harmony to me.
But say, what pleasure can its accents give
To solace thee, when thou hast ceased to live?"

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated for Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE DUCK AND THE SERPENT

ONE day as a conceited Duck was waddling away from her pond, she quacked forth loudly: "What other race of creatures can boast so many gifts as we Ducks? Earth, air and water, all three are ours. When I tire of walking, I can fly if it suits me; or if I prefer I can swim."

A wily Serpent overheard the boasting speech of the clumsy bird, and full of contempt, glided up, exclaiming with a scornful hiss: "I think, Mrs. Duck, there is small reason for what you have just said. These boasted gifts of yours make a pretty poor showing, since you cannot swim like a trout, or run lightly and swiftly like a deer, or follow the eagle in his flight."

It is a mistake to think that there is merit in a little knowledge of many things. Aim to do well what you can do, if you want to stand high among your fellows.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables.)

THE JEWELLER AND THE LACE-MAKER

I N cottage neat, of lowly race,
Lived one who fabricated lace,
And near her, miserly and old,
A tradesman dwelt who worked in gold.
"Dame," quoth the jeweller one day,
"'Tis strange to me that folks should pay
Such prices for thy lace per ell,
Whilst I so ill my fringes sell,
Though, by the village train, 'tis said,
Gold is more precious deemed than thread."

To whom the dame, "My friend, you'll find
To different views are men inclined;
Some in those articles delight,
Which taste and elegance unite,
While others, fond of pomp and show,
On finery their thoughts bestow;
Now if the lovely fair incline
My works to value more than thine,
Though I acknowledge it is said,
Gold is more precious deemed than thread,
From this the preference may arise,
Some neatness more than splendour prize,
And hence, my laces more admire,
Than all thy gold and silver wire."

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated by John Balfour.)

THE FROG AND THE HEN

A FROG, splashing in his native pond, was one day much annoyed by the cackling from a neighbouring hen-roost. So he hopped out of the water, and making his way straight to the nest of the worthy Hen, addressed her as follows:

"Good morning, Madam Hen, so it is you, is it, that's making all this noise? Then let me tell you that I think it very hard that fate has afflicted me with such a noisy neighbour. Pray tell me what all this chatter is about?"

"I have just laid an egg," replied the Hen, "and I wanted everybody to know about it."

"Only an egg!" sneered the Frog, "really is that all? Small reason, I must say, for so much fuss and boasting!"

"Only an egg, indeed! My good sir, what business have you to complain about my cackling when I have patiently borne in silence your everlasting croaking? If I publish abroad what I do it is because I know that I am useful. But you Frogs are worthless, idle, puffed-up breed who might far better hold your tongues!"

(Iriarte, *Literary Fables*.)

THE TWO THRUSHES

A SAGE old Thrush was once discipling
His grandson Thrush, a hair-brain'd stripling,
In the purveying art. He knew,
He said, where vines in plenty grew,
Whose fruit delicious when he'd come

He might attack *ad libitum*.

"Ha!" said the young one, "where's this vine—

Let's see this fruit you think so fine."

"Come then, my child, your fortune's great, you

Can't conceive what feasts await you!"

He said, and gliding through the air

They reached a vine, and halted there.

Soon as the grapes the youngster spied,

"Is this the fruit you praise?" he cried:

"Why, an old bird, Sir, as you are,

Should judge, I think, more wisely far

Than to admire, or hold as good,

Such half-grown, small, and worthless food.

Come, see a fruit which I possess

In yonder garden; you'll confess,

When you behold it, that it is

Bigger and better far than this."

"I'll go," he said; "but ere I see

This fruit of yours, whate'er it be,

I'm sure it is not worth a stone,

Or grape-skin from my vines alone."

They reached the spot the Thrushlet named,

And he triumphantly exclaimed—

"Show me the fruit to equal mine!

A size so great—a shape so fine;

What luxury, however rare,—

Can e'en your grapes with *this* compare?"

The old bird stared, as well he might,

For lo! a *pumpkin* met his sight!

Now that a thrush should take this fancy,
Without much marvelling I can see;—
But it is truly monstrous, when
Men, who are held as learned men,
All books, whate'er they be, despise,
Unless of largest bulk and size.
A book is great, if good at all,—
If bad—it cannot be too small.

(Iriarte, Literary Fables. Translated by John Balfour.)

THE SCRUPULOUS CATS

TWO Cats, old Tortoise-back and Kate,
Once from a spit a capon ate.
It was a giddy thing, be sure,
And one they could not hide nor cure.

They licked themselves, however, clean,
And then sat down behind a screen,
And talked it over. Quite precise,
They took each other's best advice.

Whether to eat the spit, or no?
"And *did* they eat it?" "Sir, I trow,
They did not! They were honest things,
Who had a conscience and knew how it stings!"

(Felix Maria de Samaniego. From Spanish Literature, by George Ticnor.)

THE CATERPILLAR AND THE BUTTERFLY

GOOD-MORROW, friend," so spoke, upon a day
A Caterpillar to a Butterfly.
The winged creature looked another way,
And made this proud reply:
"No friend of worms am I."
The insulted Caterpillar heard
"And what were thou, I pray,
Ere God bestowed on thee that brave array?
And answered thus the insulting word:
Why treat the Caterpillar tribe with scorn?
Art thou then nobly born?
What art thou, Madam, at the best?
A Caterpillar elegantly dressed."

(By José Rosas Moreno. Translated by William Cullen Bryant.)

THE SPIDER'S WEB

A DEXTROUS Spider chose
The delicate blossom of a garden rose
Whereon to plant and bind
The net he framed to take the insect kind.

And when his task was done,
Proud of the cunning lines his art had spun,
He said, "I take my stand
Close by my work, and watch what I have planned.

"And now, if heaven should bless
My labors with but moderate success,
No fly shall pass this way,
Nor gnat, but they shall fall an easy prey."

He spoke, when from the sky
A strong wind swooped, and whirling, hurried by,
And far before the blast
Rose, leaf and web and plans and hopes were cast.

(José Rosas Moreno.)

THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT

A SERPENT watched an Eagle gain
On soaring wings, a mountain height,
And envied him, and crawled in pain
To where he saw the bird alight.

So fickle fortune oftentimes
Befriends the cunning and the base,
And many a grovelling reptile climbs
Up to the Eagle's lofty place.

(José Rosas Moreno.)

THE THREE COMPANIONS

A N Ermine, a Beaver and a Wild Boar made up their minds to
seek a better country, and set out on the search for some forests,
lakes and woods, which had still preserved the beauty of their prime-

val purity. After a wearisome journey through deserts and rocks and mountains, their eyes discovered in the distance a glorious landscape, with a profusion of woods, lakes, gardens and ripe crops. The travellers were delighted at the sight, and did not at first suspect that in order to arrive at their new-found Paradise it would be necessary for them to pass through a wide expanse of stagnant water full of slime and snakes. The Ermine was the first to attempt the passage. Going delicately on the tips of his toes he made a few steps forward, but soon drew back, saying, with assumed indifference, "This country is certainly rich and beautiful, but it will not suit me; I would rather lose it all than soil the delicacy of my beautiful fur." The Beaver said, "Have a little patience, brothers; we live in such places sometimes you know, and I am a first-rate architect. In two months I will guarantee to build you a bridge over which you may pass to your future home without fear of mud or snakes." "Two months, in a coach," said the Boar, "why, we may all be dead before that time; we are much too slow for me." And so saying, he plunged into the slime. Splash, dash, he had reached the opposite side, in spite of the mud and reptiles. And while shaking off the mud, he said to his ignorant companions, "Paradise is not made for cowards or cowards but for the strong." We may all profit by this lesson.

(From Spanish Fables by Fernandez Cayetano. Translated by Margaret R. C. well.)

PART IV
RUSSIAN FABLES

THE LEAVES AND THE ROOTS

ON a beautiful summer day the Leaves of a tree whispered softly to the breezes; and as the shadows fell across the valley this was what they were saying, boasting of their luxuriant abundance:

"Is it not a fact that we are the pride of the whole valley? Is it not due to us that this tree is so vigorous and wide-spreading, so stately and majestic? What would it be without us? Yes, indeed, we may well praise ourselves without vanity! Do we not, by our cool shade, protect the shepherd and the traveller from the noonday heat? Do we not, by our beauty, attract the shepherdess to come and dance here? And from among us, both morning and evening, the nightingale sings; while as for you, gentle breezes, you hardly ever desert us."

"You might spare just a word of thanks to us," interrupted a faint voice from under ground.

"Who is it that has the audacity to call us to account? Who are you who are talking down there beneath the grass?" the leaves retorted pertly, tossing disdainfully on the tree.

"We are they," came the reply from far down below, "who burrow here in the darkness to provide you with food. Is it possible that you do not know us? We are the Roots of the tree on which you flourish. Go on rejoicing in your beauty! But remember there is this differ-

ence between us that with every autumn the old Leaves die, and with every spring new Leaves are born; but if the Roots once perish neither you nor the tree can live at all."

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE SHEEP'S PETITION

THE Sheep before the Lion came, and prayed
Protection from the Wolves, that havoc made
Among the flocks. Compassion moved his breast:
Thrice having roared, he thus his will expressed:—
"We Leo, King, and so forth,—having found
The sore indictment by the Sheep profound
Against the Wolves, and touched with sympathy
For their most sad condition, thus decree:
If any Wolf shall any Sheep offend,
Said Sheep with leave said Wolf to apprehend,
And carry him before the nearest Bear
In the Commission of the Peace—and then
Such order as the matter may invite
Be duly made—and Heaven defend the right!"
So 'twas decreed. 'Tis a most curious fact,
No Sheep hath yet enforced the Act:
'Tis probable they are no more attacked:
The Wolves now graze, it is to be inferred
(How this agrees with them I have not heard).
If rogues defraud, or men in power oppress—
Go to law instantly and get redress.

(Krilov, Fables. Translated from the Russian for Fraser's Magazine.)

THE CASK

NEIGHBOUR, a favor I would ask
—'Tis no great thing—'tis but a Cask
An empty Cask's not much to lend
Just to accommodate a friend.
When one money wants to borrow,
Then 'tis as well to cry "To-morrow—
Not just now—I can't indeed—
No cash have I but what I need."
For he that lends away his purse
May find it to return averse."
The Cask was lent—the Cask came back
Quite sound—at least, without a crack;
But then of oil't had such a snack!
So strong a scent that it quite spoiled
Whatever was poured in. 'Twas boiled,
Was scalded, aired; yet still the taint
Remained matter of complaint.
To cure it was a fruitless task,
And so they burned the infected Cask.

Parents! The lesson of my fable
For you is specially intended.
Deem not defects may be evaded
Imbued in youth; since naught is able,
When once the evil's taken place,
Early impressions to efface,

Do what we may, they still prevail
And to correct them all our efforts fail.

(Krilov, Fables. Translated from the Russian for Fraser's Magazine.)

THE TWO FLIES AND THE BEE

TWO Flies, determining to change
Their country, and abroad to range,
In order novel sights to see,
Explained their project to a Bee.

To her they stated
Their friend, Sir Parrot, had related
Of foreign parts such wondrous things,
They were resolved to use their wings.
There surely was no great temptation
Longer to stay in this dull nation,
Where everything was cold and dingy,
And folks grew every day more stingy!
"They grudge us e'en the smallest sup;
From us poor Flies they cover up
Both meat and drink; and fence, alas!
Their fruits of every kind with glass.
So are we treated by the wealthy,
And 'mongst the poor fare scarcely better,
Since Spiders there, our foes so stealthy,
Weave treacherous webs, our wings to fetter."

"Well, friends," the home-spun Bee replied,
" 'Tis not for me your scheme to chide,

If you on travelling are bent.
For my part, I am quite content
Here to remain. Folks praise my Honey;
And though it is not always sunny
In this our clime, here is our hive;
And we to earn our food contrive—
Nay, all considered, really thrive.
We have our labours to attend to,
And know that those we ought to bend to;
While folk like you go where you list
And certainly will not be missed.
It matters not where you're abiders,—
None profit by you, save the Spiders.”

(Krilov, Fables. Translated from the Russian for Fraser's Magazine.)

THE RAIN CLOUD

A LARGE Cloud passed rapidly over a country which was parched by heat, but did not let a single drop fall to refresh it. Presently this same Cloud poured a generous shower of rain into the sea, and then began to boast of its generosity, within hearing of a neighbouring Mountain. But the Mountain replied:

“What good have you done by such mistaken generosity? And how can any one help being pained by the sight of it? If you had poured your showers over the thirsty land, you would have saved a whole district from hunger. But as for the sea, my friend, it has plenty of water already, without your adding a few little rain drops to it.”

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE SQUIRREL AND THE THRUSH

ON a certain holiday a big crowd had gathered in front of the window of a rich man's home, and stared with open-mouthed wonder at a Squirrel running in the revolving wheel of its cage. A Thrush, perched on a branch of a neighbouring tree, also wondered. The Squirrel ran so fast that his feet seemed to twinkle, and his bushy tail spread itself straight out behind him.

"Dear old friend of my native woods," said the Thrush, "will you please tell me what on earth you are doing?"

"My dear fellow," replied the Squirrel, "I can hardly stop to talk, for I have to work hard all day. I am, in fact, the courier of a great nobleman, so that I can hardly stop to eat or drink or even to take breath." And immediately the Squirrel began again, running faster than ever in its wheel.

"Yes," said the Thrush, as he flew away, "I can see plainly enough that you are running. But for all that, you are always there at the same window."

There are many busy-bodies in the world, always worrying, always rushing back and forth; every one wonders at them. They seem ready to jump out of their own skins; but in spite of it all, they make no more progress than does the Squirrel in his wheel.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE PEBBLE AND THE DIAMOND

A DIAMOND which some one had lost lay for a long time beside a Pebble in the dust of the high-road. At last it was picked up by a merchant, and sold to a King who had it set in gold as one of the

ornaments of his royal crown. When the Pebble heard of the brilliant fortune of the Diamond, it began to complain of its own hard lot; and one day, seeing a peasant driving by, it called out to him:

"Do me a favour, kind sir, take me with you to the city. Why should I lie here in the mud and dust while my friend the Diamond, so I am told, is enjoying the honours of the Court? I don't understand why it has been treated so royally. It lay here beside me for many years; and after all, it is nothing but a stone, like myself. Please take me with you! Who can tell? Perhaps when I reach the city I too may be highly honoured!"

The peasant picked up the Pebble, tossed it into his lumbering cart, and brought it to the city. On its way the Pebble passed the time picturing itself as occupying a place beside the Diamond in the King's crown. But it really met with quite a different fate. It was put to good use, for it served to mend a hole in the high-road.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE PIKE AND THE CAT

A CONCEITED young Pike took it into his foolish young head to leave his native home in the water, and lead the life of a Cat. Perhaps he was envious of the Cat's easy, comfortable life; or perhaps he was tired of eating nothing but fish dinners. At all events he asked Pussy to take him with her the next time she went to hunt mice in the warehouse.

"But, my dear friend," said the Cat, "what in the world do you know about catching mice? I am afraid you will make a sad mess of it! You know the old sayings, 'A tailor should stick to his last,' and 'Jack of all trades is master of none.'"

"Don't worry about me," replied the Pike, "Catching mice is mere play to any one who is used to catching minnows!"

"Oh, very well, we shall see! Come along," said the Cat.

So the two friends went together to the warehouse, and lay in wait, each in front of a separate mouse-hole. The Cat had great luck in her hunting, and after enjoying a hearty mouse dinner, went to see what sort of sport her friend had had. Alas, the poor Pike lay flat on the ware-room floor, feebly gasping for breath, and with its tail half nibbled away by the mice. So the Cat, seeing that her friend had undertaken a task beyond his strength, dragged him back to the edge of the pond, and flung him, half dead, into his native water.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE ASS AND THE NIGHTINGALE

AN Ass, happening one day to meet a Nightingale, said to her: "Listen, my dear, they tell me that you really have a wonderful voice, and for a long time I have wanted to hear you sing, and to judge for myself whether you are as great an artist as they say."

At this the Nightingale began to display her art, whistling in countless ways, with long-drawn, sobbing notes, and passing from one song to another. At one time she let her voice die away until it was like the distant echo of the wind among the reeds; at another, she poured forth a shower of tiny notes, like the ripple of running water. All nature stopped to listen to her song: the breezes died down; the other birds were hushed; the cattle and the sheep laid themselves silently down upon the grass.

At length the singer ended. Then the Ass, bending his head towards the ground, remarked:

"That's not half bad. Honestly, I can listen to you without being bored. But it's a pity that you have never heard our Cock crowing. You would sing a great deal better if you could take a few lessons from him!"

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

TRISHKA'S CAFTAN

A CERTAIN Russian peasant named Trishka, discovered one day that his *Caftan*, or long-skirted gown, was out at elbow. It seemed a simple matter; so he took his needle, cut off a quarter of each sleeve, and used the pieces to patch the elbows. The *Caftan* was all right again, excepting that now his arms were bare for a quarter of their length. This was in itself no great matter; but Trishka soon found that everybody was laughing at him. So he said to himself:

"Since I am no fool I can soon make things right again. All I need to do is to make the sleeves as long as they were before. Oh, Trishka is a match for any of them!"

So he cut off the skirts of his *Caftan*, and used them to lengthen his sleeves. Once more Trishka was happy, even though he had a *Caftan* no longer than a waistcoat.

Moral. Many people go through life wearing Trishka's *Caftan*; They are always hoping to get out of debt by borrowing of Peter to pay Paul.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE INQUISITIVE MAN

AN Inquisitive Man was one day met by a friend who cordially hailed him:

"Good morning, my good fellow! And where do you come from?"

"From the Museum of Natural History, where I have just spent three hours. I saw everything there was to see and examined it carefully. It was all so astonishing that honestly I am not clever enough to describe the half of it. Nature is certainly wonderful in her rich variety! There are more birds and beasts than I ever dreamed of—not to mention the butterflies dragonflies and beetles—some green as emeralds and others as red as coral! And there were tiny little gnats too—why, really, some of them are smaller than the head of a pin!"

"And of course you saw the elephant? What did you think of him? I'll wager you felt as though you were looking at a mountain!"

"Elephant? Are you quite sure that they have an elephant?"

"Quite sure."

"Well, old man, don't tell anybody—but the fact is that I didn't notice the elephant!"

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG LION

ONCE upon a time the Lion, King of all the animals, became the father of a son. As the young Lion Prince grew older, the King began to ask himself which of the animals he could trust to teach his son how to become a good and wise King. Should he hand

him over to the Fox? No, for although the Fox was clever, he was a great liar, and liars are always getting into trouble. Should he entrust him to the Mole? No, for although the Mole was a careful and orderly animal, it could only see things under its very nose; it never looked far ahead. Should he choose the Panther? No, for although the Panther was strong and brave, and a great fighter, it knew nothing about law and politics—and a King must learn to be a just judge and wise statesman, as well as a good soldier. In short, not a single animal, not even the wise old Elephant, knew enough to satisfy the Lion.

Now it happened that another monarch, the Eagle, King of the birds, who was an old friend of the Lion, learned of his difficulty, and wishing to do him a great kindness offered to undertake the education of the young Prince himself. The old Lion was delighted; for what could be better than to find a King for a Prince's teacher? So the Lion's son was gotten ready, and sent off to the Eagle's Court, to learn how to be a King.

After two or three years had passed, the Lion King, who had grown quite old, sent for his son to come home and relieve him of the cares of state. Having decided to turn the kingdom over to the young Lion, he summoned all the animals together, and in the presence of this assembly he asked his son to tell them what he had been taught and if he was made King what he intended to do to make his people happy.

"Father," said the Lion Prince, "I have learned many things which no one else of all these animals here knows. I can tell where every bird, from the Eagle to the Quail, can most readily find water; what kind of food each bird needs, and how many eggs it lays; I can tell the wants of every bird that flies, without forgetting a single one. If you put me in charge of the kingdom I shall begin at once to teach the animals how to build nests."

At this the beasts all howled aloud, and the old King perceived too late, that the young Lion had not been taught the knowledge which a King needs most of all—the knowledge of the wants of his own people and the interests of his own country.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE FARMER'S HORSE AND HIS DOG

A DOG and a Horse, who both belonged to the same farmer, began, one day, to dispute as to which had given the more valuable services.

"You have done nothing to boast of!" said the Dog, "I shouldn't be surprised to see you driven off the farm altogether! A noble career, indeed, to slave all day dragging a plough or a cart. Yet I never heard of your doing anything finer! How can you possibly think yourself my equal? I never rest day or night. All day long I watch the cattle in the meadow; and throughout the night I guard the house."

"I don't deny it," replied the Horse, "All that you say is quite true. Only, please remember that if it were not for my ploughing there would be nothing at all for you to guard."

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE ELEPHANT AND THE PUG DOG

A N Elephant was once being led through the streets of a town as the chief attraction of a travelling circus, and crowds had gathered to stare and wonder at him. All of a sudden, a Pug Dog appeared from some corner or other, and as soon as he caught sight of the Elephant made a dash at him, snapping and barking fiercely.

"Stop your noise, Puppy," advised a shaggy old Mastiff, "You are making yourself ridiculous! Do you think you can fight an Elephant? You have already barked yourself hoarse; yet the Elephant keeps right on, and does not pay the slightest attention to you."

"Yes, yes," said the Pug, "that is what makes me so brave. Without having to fight at all, I can make people think that I am a very savage animal. 'Look at Puggy!' the other dogs will all say, 'what courage he must have, or he would never dare to bark at an Elephant!'"

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE BOASTFUL GEESE

A FARMER with a long rod in his hands was driving some Geese to town, to sell them, and hoping to make a good bargain, he was hurrying them on rather urgently. Consequently, the Geese complained loudly to every passer-by.

"Were ever Geese more unfortunate than we? This farmer drives us along as roughly as though we were common, ordinary Geese. He is such an ignorant fellow himself that he does not know that he ought to pay us great honour, because we are the noble sons of those famous Geese that once saved Rome from destruction."

"And is that your reason for expecting people to honour you to-day?" one of the passers-by asked them.

"Why, yes, our fathers, the Geese of Rome—"

"I know, I have read all about that. But what I am asking you, is of what use have you yourselves ever been? What have you done?"

"We? Why, nothing!"

"Then why should you expect to be held in honour? Let your fathers sleep in peace—they received their reward. But you, my friends, are fit only to be roasted."

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE CUCKOO AND THE EAGLE

THE Eagle, King of the birds, once appointed a Cuckoo to the position of Court Nightingale. The Cuckoo, proud of his new rank, seated himself on the bough of an aspen tree, and began to show his qualities as a singer. Presently he looked around to see what sort of an impression he was making. To his dismay all the other birds were starting to fly away, some angrily protesting, and the rest laughing at him. The Cuckoo was very indignant, and hurried back to the Eagle to make a complaint against the other birds.

"Your Majesty, I ask for justice," he cried, "By your command I was appointed Court Nightingale of these woods—and yet the other birds have dared to laugh at my singing!"

"My friend," answered the Eagle, "I am a King, but I am not God. It is impossible for me to do away with the cause of your complaint. I can order a Cuckoo to be called a Nightingale. But to make a Nightingale out of a Cuckoo—that I cannot do."

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE ELEPHANT IN FAVOR

ONCE upon a time the Elephant was high in favour at the Court of the Lion, King of beasts. All the animals of the forest began to gossip, and many were the guesses they made as to how the Elephant had become such a favourite.

"He is not a handsome beast," the animals all agreed, "he is not even amusing. And as for his habits, he certainly has very bad manners!"

"If he only had a brush like mine," said the Fox, proudly whisking his fine, bushy tail, "I should not have thought it so strange!"

"Or if he had big, strong claws like mine," rejoined the Bear, "it would not have been so extraordinary. But, as we all know, the poor beast has no claws at all!"

"You don't think, do you, that his tusks got him into favor?" broke in the Ox. "Is it possible that they were mistaken for horns, like mine?"

"Do you mean to tell me," demanded the Ass, shaking his ears, "that you really none of you know what it is that has made the Elephant so popular at Court? Why, I guessed the reason right away! If it had not been for his beautiful long ears, he would never have got into favour!"

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE EAGLE AND THE SPIDER

AN Eagle had soared above the clouds to the highest peak of a mountain range, and perching upon an ancient cedar, admired the landscape spread out below it. For it seemed as though the boundaries of the whole world could be seen from that height.

"Heaven be praised," said the Eagle, "for giving me such powers of flight, that there is no mountain too high for me to reach. I am now looking down upon the beauties of the world from a point which no other living creature has ever reached!"

"What a boaster you are," observed a Spider from a near-by twig.

"Where I am sitting isn't so far below you, is it, friend Eagle?"

The Eagle glanced upward. True enough, the Spider was busily spinning its web from a twig above his head.

"However did you reach this height?" asked the Eagle. "Weak and wingless, as you are, how did you ever crawl way up here?"

"Why, I fastened myself unto you," returned the Spider. "You yourself brought me from down below clinging to your tail feathers. But now that I am so high up in the world I can get along very well by myself, without your help. So you needn't put on any airs with me. For I want to tell you that—"

At this moment a sudden gust of wind swept by, and brushed the Spider, web and all, back again into the depths of the valley from which it had come.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE MONKEY AND THE SPECTACLES

A MONKEY, which had grown weak-sighted in old age, remembered having heard men say that this was not a serious misfortune, but only made it necessary to wear glasses. So the Monkey provided himself with half a dozen pairs of Spectacles, and after turning them this way and that, tried wearing them first on the top of his head, and then on the end of his tail, smelled of them and licked them, but all to no purpose. The Spectacles did not help him to see any better. "Good gracious," cried the Monkey, "what fools people are to listen to all the nonsense that they hear. All that I have been told about Spectacles is a pack of lies. They are not a particle of

use to me!" And hereupon the Monkey in his vexation flung the Spectacles down upon the ground so violently that they were broken to pieces.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE KITE AND THE BUTTERFLY

APAPER Kite, which some boys were flying until it soared above the clouds, called down from on high to a Butterfly far below in the valley.

"Really and truly, friend Butterfly, I hardly recognized you from way up here. Confess, now, that you envy me when you see how high I am flying!"

"Envy you? No, indeed!" replied the Butterfly, "you have no reason for feeling so proud of yourself! You fly high, to be sure. But you are always tied by a string. Such a life, my friend, is very far from a happy one. As for me, humble though I am, I still can fly where I choose. I should not want to spend all my life as the tool of some one else's foolish amusement!"

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE COMB

A LOVING mother bought a good, strong Comb, to keep her little boy's hair in order. The child was so pleased with his new present that he would not let it out of his hands. Whether playing games, or learning his alphabet, he was all the time drawing the Comb through his soft, thick, golden curls. And what a wonderful Comb is was! It not only did not pull out his hair, but glided through so smoothly and easily that it never even got caught in it. But at last,

one day, this good, kind, wonderful Comb was lost. The boy had been playing and romping until he had got his hair into a regular tangle. But no sooner did the nurse start to comb it than the boy began to cry and scream, "Where is my own Comb?" and would not let any one touch his hair with any comb but his.

At last the Comb was found. But when they tried to draw it through his hair, it could not be moved either backward or forward; all it did was to pull his hair out by the roots, and bring tears of pain to his eyes.

"How wicked you are, you bad old Comb!" cried the boy. But the Comb replied:

"My dear boy, I am the same Comb that I always was; only your hair has become badly tangled." Whereupon our foolish young friend in his rage flung his Comb out of the window into the river.

So long as men have a clear conscience they love to hear the truth, as the little boy loved his Comb. It is only when our consciences become tangled that the truth begins to hurt.

(Krilov, Fables. Adapted from the translation by William R. S. Ralston.)

THE EAGLE AND THE WORM

UPON the summit of a lofty rock,
An Eagle chanced to espy
A Worm; whom thus he 'gan in taunting tone to mock:
"Reptile! What raised thee thus high?
How haps it I so vile a creature see
Perched on the same eminence with me,
Here daring to abide?"
"By my own strength," the Worm replied,

"I hither made my way; and small in
My opinion, the difference of the mode
In which to the same point we took our road;
What you by soaring did, I did by *crawling*."

(Anonymous. Translated from the Russian for Fraser's Magazine.)

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PART V

GERMAN FABLES

PART V

GERMAN FABLES

THE FIR-TREE AND THE PALM

A LONELY Fir-tree standeth,
On a height where north winds blow;
It sleepeth, with whitened garment,
Enshrouded by ice and snow.

It dreameth of a Palm-tree,
That far in the Eastern land
Lonely and silent mourneth
On its burning shelf of sand.

(Heinrich Heine. Translated by W. W. Story.)

THE COCK AND THE RAVEN

A RAVEN rather thievishly inclined,
Went hopping here and there to pilfer
Such little god-sends, both of gold and silver
As he could find.
With seals, and watch-chains, trinkets, rings,
And fifty other pretty little things.
At last a grave old Cock, who saw,
At sundry times,
Our black transgressor of the law,
Commit these crimes;

One day address'd him with a "Pr'ythee,
Why dost thou fetch these gew-gaws with thee?
What use can *these* be to thee?"—"None,"
Quoth the old robber, in a croaking tone,
 "But then I take them
 You see, to make them
 My own."

(*Rabner.*)

THE GREEN DONKEY

A CERTAIN Simpleton painted his Donkey green—that is, he painted the body green and the legs red—and started to lead him along the street. Every one, young and old, came out to stare. "What a marvel!" cried the whole town, "A grass-green Donkey with scarlet legs! Here is a story to be handed down to our grandchildren as one of the wonders of our generation!" The streets swarmed with the crowds jostling and shoving to get a sight. They filled the windows and thronged the doors: for every one wanted at least to see the Green Donkey even if they could not get a chance to walk beside it.

For the first two days they followed the Donkey, marvelling at him. Even the sick folk forgot their pains when the Green Donkey was talked of. And even the nurses stopped singing children to sleep with "Baa, baa, Black Sheep," but sang instead of Green Donkeys.

But the third day had hardly passed when the novelty of the Green Donkey was over. Everybody had lost all desire to see a painted

Donkey of any colour. And however wonderful he had seemed at first, there was soon not a person in town who ever said a word about him.

(From the German of Gellert.)

THE CUCKOO

ONE day a Cuckoo, in his flights up and down,
 Fell in with a Starling escaping from town:
 "Pray, what is the talk?" he began with an air;
 "Pray, how do they speak of our songs in the city?
 Pray, what do they think of the Nightingale there?"
 "The whole of the town is in love with her ditty."—
 "And pray, what remark do they pass on the lark?"—
 "She's high in renown with the half of the town."—
 "Indeed! well, and as to the blackbird?"—"He too,
 Is very much praised, here and there, by a few."—
 "Well, now I've to add, that I'd feel very glad
 If you'd tell me the various opinions that go forth,
 Respecting *myself*, and *my* merits, and so forth?"—
 "Why that," said the Starling, "I hardly can do,
 For scarcely a soul ever talks about you."—
 "Base ingrates!—well then, as they grant me no praise
 I'll trumpet myself to the end of my days."
 So saying, away to the forest he flew,
 And even since then has been crying "*Cuckoo!*"

(Gellert.)

THE COLT

A COLT, that had never felt a rider's weight, looked upon bridle and saddle as marks of distinction. Under this impression, it ran after every Horse on which it saw a man mounted, and sighed impatiently for the time when it should be similarly honoured.

At length the envied trappings were placed upon the Colt; and it was led gently up and down, in order that it might become accustomed to the curb. The Colt strutted proudly up and down and was immensely pleased with itself.

Elate with its new honours, it returned to its stall and neighing loudly, told all the Horses of its good fortune. "I was praised by all who saw me," it told the nearest Horse. "A red bridle hung from my mouth and lay gracefully over my black mane."

But the very next day the Colt came sorrowfully back, in a white lather of perspiration, and said: "Life is full of disappointments! To be sure, my bridle is ornamental; but it was not made for that. It was invented for my rider's benefit, and to make me his obedient slave."

(Gellert, Fables. Bussey's translation.)

THE WOLF ON HIS DEATH-BED

A WOLF lay at his last gasp, and recalled the many events of his past life. "True, I am a sinner," said he, "but let me still hope, not one of the greatest. I have done harm, but also much good. Once, I remember, a bleating Lamb, which had strayed from the flock, came so near me that I could easily have throttled it; yet I did not

harm the Lamb. At the same time, I listened to the jeers and jibes of an old Sheep with the most surprising indifference, although there were no Sheep-dogs there to be feared."

"I can explain all that," interrupted his friend, the Fox, who was comforting his last hours. "I remember distinctly all the circumstances. It was precisely the time that you so unfortunately got a bone stuck in your throat, which the kind-hearted Crane afterwards drew out!"

(Lessing, Fables, Book II, No. 4. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE OX AND THE CALF

A POWERFUL Ox tore away the upper part of the door-way with his horns, in pushing himself through the low entrance of his stall.

"Look, Master!" shouted a presumptuous young Calf, "I do not injure your property as the clumsy Ox does!

"How glad I would be," answered the Master, "if you were already big and strong enough to be able to do so!"

(Lessing, Fables, Book II, No. 5. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE BLIND HEN

A HEN who had lost her sight, and was accustomed to scratching up the earth in search of food, although blind, still continued to scratch away most diligently. Of what use was it to the industrious fool? Another sharp-sighted hen who spared her tender feet, never budged from her side, and enjoyed, without scratching, the fruit of the other's labour. For as often as the Blind Hen scratched up a barley-corn, her watchful companion devoured it.

(Lessing, Fables, Book II, No. 9. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE DONKEYS

ONCE upon a time the Donkeys complained to Jupiter that they were treated too cruelly by mankind. "Our strong backs," said they, "carry burdens which every weaker animal and Man himself would sink under. And what is more, they try to force us by merciless beating to go at a speed which is rendered impossible by our heavy loads, even if it were not denied us by nature. Forbid them, Great Jupiter, to be so unreasonable. We are willing to serve them, since we seem to have been created for that purpose, but we object to being beaten without cause."

"My children," replied Jupiter, "your request is just. But I see no possible way of convincing Mankind that your natural slowness is not due to laziness. And as long as they believe this, you will be beaten. But I have thought of one way of lightening your sorrows. From this moment onward I will dull your sense of feeling; your skins shall be toughened to resist blows, and to fatigue the arm of the Driver."

"Immortal Jupiter," shouted the Donkeys, "you are ever wise and merciful," and they departed from his throne rejoicing.

(Lessing, Fables, Book II, No. 10. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE WILD APPLE-TREE

A SWARM of Bees settled and built their hive in the hollow trunk of a Wild Apple-Tree. They soon filled the hollow with the treasures of their Honey, and the Wild Apple-Tree became so proud in consequence that it looked down contemptuously upon all its neighbours.

Hereupon a Rose-Bush thus addressed the Tree: "Truly yours is a poor sort of pride that bases itself upon borrowed sweetness! Is your miserable fruit any the less bitter because the Bees have made their home in your hollow trunk? Sweeten it then with their honey, if you can; for not until then will you be of any value to Mankind!"

(Lessing, Fables, Book II, No. 25. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE BRAMBLE

"WILL you kindly explain," said the Willow to the Bramble, "why you are so eager to seize hold of the clothes of every man, woman or child that passes by? Of what use can their clothes possibly be to you?"

"Of no use," said the Bramble. "Neither do I wish to take the clothes from them. I only want to tear them."

(Lessing, Fables, Book II, No. 27. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE ARCHER AND HIS BOW

AN Archer once had an excellent Bow made of ebony, which would carry an arrow true to the mark from a great distance. Consequently he valued it very highly. One day, however, as he examined it attentively, he soliloquized: "You are still a little too thick; and you have no decorations excepting your polish. What a pity!" Then on second thought he added, "But that may be remedied. I will go to the cleverest artist I can find and order him to carve my Bow with ornamental figures."

Without losing a moment, the Archer set out to find the Artist; and the Artist soon carved a complete hunting scene on the Bow; and what could be more suitable on a weapon of the chase?

The Archer was delighted. "Ah! my dear Bow," he said, "you well deserve these embellishments!" Wishing again to try its powers, he spans the Bow and it breaks.

(Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 1. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

SOLOMON'S GHOST

A VENERABLE old man, despite his years and the heat of the day, was ploughing his field with his own hand, and sowing the grain in the willing earth, in anticipation of the harvest it would produce.

Suddenly beneath the deep shadow of a spreading oak, a divine apparition stood before him! The old man was seized with affright.

"I am Solomon," said the phantom encouragingly. "What dost thou here, old friend?"

"If thou art Solomon," said the owner of the field, "how canst thou ask? In my youth I learnt from the ant to be industrious and to accumulate wealth. That which I then learnt I now practise."

"Thou hast learnt but the half of thy lesson," pursued the spirit. "Go once more to the ant, and she will teach thee to rest in the winter of thy existence, and enjoy what thou hast earned."

(Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 3. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE SHEEP AND THE SWALLOW

A SWALLOW alighted on the back of a Sheep, to pluck a little wool for her nest. The Sheep, unwilling to lose any of his coat, tried to shake off the intruder.

"What makes you so unfriendly towards me?" asked the Swallow. "You allow the Shepherd to shear you of your wool from head to foot;

yet you grudge me the smallest bit of it. Whatever is the reason?"

"The reason," replied the Sheep, "is that you lack the skill to take off my wool in the same easy manner that the Shepherd shears me."

(Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 5. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE BEAR AND THE ELEPHANT

"WHAT incomprehensible creatures men are!" said the Bear to the Elephant. "What will they not expect next of us superior animals? I am forced to dance to music, I, a serious-minded Bear! Yet they know quite well that such foolish capers are unsuited to my dignified nature. Otherwise why do they always laugh when I dance?"

"I also dance to music," replied the wise old Elephant," and I consider myself quite as sedate and honourable as yourself. Nevertheless, the spectators never laugh at me; all that can be read in their faces is a pleased wonderment. Believe me, friend Bear, the people laugh at you, not because you dance, but because you look as though you felt so silly."

(Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 11. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE OSTRICH

THE arrow-swift Reindeer once saw an Ostrich, and said: "There is nothing remarkable about the way in which the Ostrich runs. But it is quite likely that he flies much better."

At another time the Eagle saw the Ostrich, and said: "To be sure the Ostrich cannot fly, but I dare say that he may run rather well."

(Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 12. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE BENEFACTORS

"HAVE you in the creation, any greater benefactor than me?" asked the bee of a man.

"Most undoubtedly," replied the man.

"Name him!"

"The sheep! For his wool is necessary to me, and your honey is only a luxury. And I will give you another reason, Mrs. Bee, why I consider the sheep a greater benefactor than you. The sheep gives me his wool without the least trouble or danger; but when I take your honey, you keep me in constant apprehension of your sting."

(*Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 13. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.*)

THE OLD STAG AND THE YOUNG STAG

AN Old Stag, whom kindly nature had allowed to live to the age of a hundred years, once said to one of his grandchildren: "I can still well remember the time when man had not yet invented the noisy shot-gun."

"What a happy time that must have been for our race," sighed the Young Stag.

"You jump too quickly at conclusions," answered the Old Stag. "The times were no better than they are now; they were only different. Instead of the shot-gun men had the bow and arrow, and we were just as badly off then as we are now."

(*Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 26. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.*)

THE PEACOCK AND THE ROOSTER

THE Peacock once said to the barn-yard Hen: "Listen to me! Have you ever thought that no matter how bravely and haughtily your Rooster struts about, men never speak of him as 'the proud Rooster?' Yet they always speak of me as 'the proud Peacock!'"

"The reason for that," answered the Hen, "is that men will excuse a justifiable pride. The Rooster is proud of his manliness, and the faithful watch he keeps. But what have you to be proud of? Paint and feathers!"

(Lessing, Fables, Book III, No. 27. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE LION AND THE HARE

A LION once honored a Hare with his friendship. "Is it really a fact," asked the Hare, "that the crowing of a miserable cock is enough to scare you Lions into running away?"

"Such is undoubtedly the case," replied the Lion. "And it is a general truth that we larger animals, almost all of us, have some one foolish weakness. For example, you yourself must have heard that the grunting of a pig will astonish and terrify an elephant."

"Indeed!" interrupted the Hare. "Ah! now I understand why we Hares are so terribly afraid of a dog."

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 3. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

JUPITER AND THE HORSE

FATHER of man and beast," said the Horse, approaching the throne of Jupiter, "it is said that I am one of the noblest creatures with which you have adorned the world, and my vanity tells

me to believe it. But do you not think it would still be possible to improve my form?"

"And how do you propose to improve it? Speak, for I am open to suggestions," returned Jupiter, smiling graciously.

"Perhaps," returned the Horse, "I might have more speed if my legs were longer and more slender; a long swan-like neck would add to my beauty; a broader chest would increase my strength; and since you have destined me to carry upon my back your favourite, man, it might be well if the saddle, which my kind rider provides me with, should once for all be made a part of my body."

"Excellent," replied Jupiter, "wait a moment!"

And then, with a solemn air, he spoke the Word of Creation. The dust received the breath of life, matter took on its appointed form; and suddenly there stood before the throne the ungainly Camel. The Horse saw, shrank back, and shuddered in disgust and fear.

"Here," said Jupiter, "are longer and more slender legs; here is a long swan-like neck, a broader chest, a ready-made saddle. Is this the form you wish in place of your own?"

The Horse continued to shudder in silence.

"Go," concluded Jupiter, "and this time the warning shall be sufficient without further punishment. But in order to remind you from time to time of the folly of your audacity, this new creation shall continue to exist!" Then, casting a sustaining glance upon the Camel, he added, "And no Horse shall ever look upon the Camel without fear and trembling."

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE PEACOCK

A SOCIABLE Nightingale found among the other songsters of the grove plenty of birds who envied her, but not a single friend. "Perhaps," thought she, "I may find a friend in some other branch of the bird family," and accordingly flew confidently to the home of the Peacock.

"Beautiful Peacock! how much I admire you!" she said.

"No less than I admire you, lovely Nightingale," returned the Peacock.

"Then let us be friends," declared the Nightingale, "for we need never be envious of each other. You are as pleasing to the eye as I am to the ear." Accordingly the Nightingale and the Peacock became fast friends.

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 7. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERD

A SHEPHERD had lost the whole of his flock from a dreadful epidemic. The Wolf, hearing of it, came to offer his sympathy.

"Shepherd," said he, "is it true that you have met with this sad affliction, and have lost your whole flock? Such a gentle, obedient flock! I feel for you deeply, and could almost shed tears of blood."

"Many thanks, Master Wolf," said the Shepherd, "I see that you have a heart overflowing with compassion."

"Indeed he has," added the Shepherd's Dog, "whenever he himself suffers through a neighbour's misfortune."

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 8. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE WOLF, A HERO

"MY Father, of glorious memory," said a young Wolf to a Fox, "was a true hero! He taught the entire neighbourhood to fear him. In the course of a long life, he met and conquered more than two hundred enemies, and sent their miserable souls to the Kingdom of Death. What wonder is there that at last he was vanquished by one of them?"

"Thus would a prejudiced friend write his epitaph," rejoined the Fox. "But an impartial historian would add that the two hundred enemies whom he conquered in the course of his long life were only Sheep and Asses, and that the one enemy by whom he was vanquished was the first Ox he had ever dared to attack."

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 12. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE GOOSE

ONCE upon a time there was a Goose whose feathers rivalled the whiteness of the newly fallen snow. In her pride at this dazzling gift of Nature, she considered herself intended for a Swan, rather than for what she really was. Accordingly, separating herself from her companions, she swam around the pond in solitary majesty. She now stretched her neck, the tell-tale shortness of which she made every effort to disguise. Now, she tried to give it that graceful curve which is the unmistakable charm of a really beautiful Swan. But she tried in vain, for her neck was too stiff, and in spite of all her pains she remained a ridiculous Goose, and never inspired a single beholder with the least idea that she resembled a Swan.

How many Geese there are, without wings, who, because of similar pretensions become a laughing stock to their neighbours.

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 14. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE OAK AND THE PIG

A GLUTTONOUS Pig was feeding beneath a lofty Oak tree, upon the fallen acorns. Even while he ate one acorn, he was already casting a greedy eye upon another.

"Ungrateful beast!" at length exclaimed the Oak, "you fatten yourself upon my fruit without bestowing a single thought of gratitude upon the source of it.

The Pig, interrupting his feeding for a moment, grunted in reply: "My grateful regards should not be wanting, if only I could feel sure that you had let your acorns fall on my account."

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 15. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE SPARROWS

THERE was once an ancient church in the chinks and crannies of which the Sparrows had built countless nests. In the course of time this old church was repaired. As it stood in all the lustre of its new stone and plaster, the Sparrows returned to look for their old homes; but they found that these had all been carefully bricked up.

"Of what earthly use," cried the Sparrows, "can so large a building now be? Come, let us leave this useless pile of stone to its fate!"

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 17. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

THE OX AND THE STAG

THE clumsy Ox and the nimble Stag once had their pasture together in the same meadow.

"Stag," said the Ox, "if the Lion should attack us, let us pledge ourselves to assist each other; between your antlers and my horns, we shall be able to keep him off bravely."

"Such a bargain would never suit me," replied the Stag. "Why should I promise to engage in an unequal contest with the Lion, when my swift legs enable me so easily to escape from him?"

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 27. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

ÆSOP AND THE ASS

"THE next time you write a fable about me," said the donkey to Æsop, "make me say something wise and sensible."

"Something sensible from you!" exclaimed Æsop; "what would the world think? People would call you the moralist, and me the donkey!"

(Lessing, Fables, Book I, No. 30. Translated by G. Moir Bussey.)

PART VI

POLISH FABLES

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POLISH FABLES

THE WAGGONER AND THE BUTTERFLY



THE rain so soft had made the road,
That, in a rut, a Waggon-load,
The poor man's harvest (bitter luck),
Sank down a foot, and then it stuck.
He whipp'd his horses, but in vain;
They pull'd and splash'd and pulled again,
But vainly still, the slippery soil
Defied their strength, and mock'd their toil.
Panting they stood, with legs outspread,
The driver stood and scratched his head:
(A common custom, by-the-by,
When people know not what to try,
Tho' not, it seems, a remedy).
A Butterfly, in flower concealed,
Had travell'd with them from the field,
Who in the Waggon was thrown up,
While feasting on a buttercup.
The panting of each lab'ring beast
Disturbed her at her fragrant feast;
The sudden stop, the driver's sigh,
Awoke her gen'rous sympathy.
And seeing the distressing case
She cried, while springing from her place,

(Imagining her tiny freight
A vast addition to the weight),
"I must have pity—and be gone,
Now, master Waggoner, drive on."

Do not admire this Butterfly,
Young reader; I will tell you why:
At first good nature seems a cause,
Why she should merit your applause,
But 'twas conceit, that fill'd her breast:
Her self-importance made a jest
Of what might otherwise have claimed
Your praise,—but now she must be blamed.
Should any case occur when you
May have some friendly act to do;
Give all *your feeble aid*—as such,
But estimate it not too much.

(Translated from the Polish of Ignace Krasicki.)

THE BIRD-CALL

A MIMIC I knew,
To give him his due,
Was exceeded by none and was equalled by few.

He could bark like a dog;
He could grunt like a hog;
Nay, I really believe, he could croak like a frog.

Then, as for a bird,
You may trust to my word,
'Twas the best imitation that ever you heard.

Yes, it must be confessed
That he copied them best;
You'd have thought he had lived all his life in a nest!

The Chaffinch's tone
Was completely his own;
Not one of the tribe had the difference known.

The Goldfinch and Thrush
Would often cry, "Hush!
Our brothers are singing in yonder low bush!"

And then what a race
To fly to the place,
Where the cunning rogue cleverly captured the brace!

But it happened one day
That he came in the way
Of a sportsman, an excellent marksman, they say.

While near a hedge-wall
With his little bird-call
He amused himself mimicking birds, one and all.

And so well did he do it
That many flew to it:
But, alas! he had presently good cause to rue it:

For it proved sorry fun,
Since the man with the gun,
Who was seeking for Partridges, took him for one.

He was shot in the side;
And he feelingly cried,
A very few minutes before he died:

“Who for others prepare
A trap, should beware
Lest they sooner or later fall in their own snare.”

(From the Polish of Ignace Krasicki.)

THE MAN AND HIS COAT

A MAN beat his Coat
Now and then with a cane;
And, astonished, one morning,
He heard it complain:

“Ungratefully treated!
My fortune is hard!
To beat me, dear Master!
Is this my reward?”

"I beat you?" he answered,

"The charge is unjust:

I but gently endeavour

To take out the dust.

The means I make use of

To you may seem hard;

But it does not diminish,

Good Coat, my regard.

My son, whom I cherish

More fondly than you,

I cane rather often,

For like reason too.

The faults that, in children,

We needs must repress,

Are like dust, that beclouds

The most exquisite dress;

A little exertion

Will soon work a cure,

And will make both more lovely,

More worthy, more pure."

Though the fable is good,

Yet I never will blush

To own, *I* prefer dusting

My coat with a brush.

To most of my readers
I need not explain,
Advice is the brush
I prefer to a Cane.

(Translated from the Polish of Ignace Krasicki.)

THE ASS AND THE LAMB

"**H**OW hard is my fate!
What sorrows await,"
Said the Ass to the Sheep, "my deplorable state!

Cold, naked, ill-fed,
I sleep in a shed,
And the snow, wind and rain come in over my head.

All this day did I pass
In a yard without grass;—
What a pity that I was created an Ass!

As for Master, he sat
By the fire, with the Cat;
And they both looked as you do, contented and fat.

Your nice coat of wool,
So elastic and full,
Makes you much to be envied,—aye, more than the Bull!"

"How can you pretend,"
Said his poor bleating friend,
"To complain? Let me silence to you recommend.

My sorrows are deep,"
Continued the Sheep,
And her eyes looked as if she were ready to weep.

"I expect,—'tis no fable,—
To be dragged from the stable,
And to-morrow, perhaps, be cut up for the table.

Now you, with docility,
Strength and civility,—
Will live some years longer, in all probability.

So, no envy, I beg,
For I'll bet you an egg,
You will carry the spinach to eat with my leg."
The situation of those we envy is often much worse than our own.
(Translated from the Polish of Ignace Krasicki.)

THE BROOK AND THE FOUNTAIN

A FOUNTAIN varied gambols played
Close by an humble Brook;
While gently murmuring through the glade,
Its peaceful course it took.

Perhaps it gave one envious glance
Upon the Fountain's height,
While glittering in the morning's rays,
Pre-eminently bright.

In all the colours of the sky
Alternately it shone:
The Brook observed with a sigh
But quietly rolled on.

The owner of the Fountain died;
Neglect soon brought decay:
The bursting pipes were ill-supplied:
The Fountain ceased to play.

But still the Brook her peaceful course
Continued to pursue;
Her ample, inexhaustive source
From nature's fount she drew.

"Now," said the Brook, "I bless my fate,
My showy rival gone;
Contented in its native state
My little stream rolls on.

And all the world has cause, indeed,
To own, with grateful heart,
How much great Nature's work excels

The feeble works of art."

Humble usefulness is preferable to idle splendour.

(From the Polish of Ignace Krasicki.)

WINE AND WATER

A PARTY of pleasure their sandwiches took,
In the shade of a willow, that hung o'er a brook;
A bottle of Wine, that stood ready for drinking,
Thus spoke to the Water (I think, without thinking):—

"How much more than you to be envied am I!
The drink of the titled and rich I supply,—
While you (I could never endure it, I'm sure),
Are stood in by cattle and drunk by the poor."

"I own," said the Water, with modest reply,
"Your grandness,—I never aspire so high.
I know the rich think me their notice below,
Except just for washing their faces, or so.

If to boasting inclined, I have reason,—for see
Yon group of young swimmers, delighting in me.
To give pleasure and health to them, only is *mine*;
For who ever bathed in a river of Wine?

Then look at the strength of the lads in this place;
Who, contented with me, have such health in their face;
They work for your master and frugally dine,
And give him the money to pay for his Wine.

They envy him not, nor do I envy *you*;
The rich are but mortals,—the poor are so too,—
The rich *may* be happy with Wine and the gout;
But pray let the poor man be happy without."

(Translated from the Polish of Ignace Krasicki.)

BOOK FOUR
KRAAL AND WIGWAM FABLES

PART I

AFRICAN FABLES

PART I

AFRICAN FABLES

THE HEDGEHOG AND THE DOG



HE Hedgehog and the Dog were formerly good friends, and cultivated bananas together. When the bananas were full-grown, the Hedgehog used to go to look at them every day, and when at last they were ripe he invited the Dog to go with him and eat them. When the two friends reached the foot of the banana tree, the Hedgehog tried in vain to reach the bunches of bananas. The Dog, meanwhile, standing on his hind legs, could easily reach up and pluck the fruit. He found them so good that he did not stop until he had eaten all the bananas, without giving a single one to the Hedgehog, regardless of his entreaties.

When the Dog had eaten the last banana the Hedgehog said: "Now let us play a game that I often play with my brothers. You must take a bamboo and sharpen it at both ends; and when it is sharp you must stick it into the ground at the foot of the tree, and then climb the tree and jump down on the stick. The Dog was willing to play this game, and when all was ready he invited the Hedgehog to jump first, and even helped him up the tree, since his friend could not climb alone. The Hedgehog jumped first, straight down onto the bamboo stick,—but thanks to his stiff quills, he was not hurt. Then came the turn of the Dog, and he jumped, and was transfixed by the sharp bamboo. As the Hedgehog departed he called over his shoulder, "Ask your banana skins to help you!"

(Senegal Folk-Tale, from Collection de Contes et Chansons Populaires, Vol. 40.)

THE WREN AND THE CAMEL

A PAIR of Wrens once built their nest in a hedge beside a highway. Soon after the eggs were hatched, a Camel happened to pass that way. The little Wrens saw him, and said to the father bird, when he returned from the fields:

"Oh, papa, a monstrous big animal came by here just now."

The wren stretched out one leg: "As big as that, my children?"

"Oh, papa, much bigger than that!"

The Wren stretched out a leg and a wing: "As big as that, my children?"

"Oh, papa, much bigger."

Finally the Wren spread out both wings and legs: "As big as that, then?"

"Oh, yes, much bigger!"

"That is impossible, my children, for there is no animal bigger than I!"

"Just you wait and you will see for yourself," said the little Wrens.

Presently the Camel came back, browsing along the hedge. The Wren was perched beside his nest; and the Camel, biting off a bunch of leaves, and not seeing the bird, took him in with them. The Wren, however, flew out safe and sound between the Camel's big teeth, and hurried back to his children.

"You are quite right," he said. "The Camel is a monstrous big animal. But I am pretty well satisfied with myself, just the same."

(Kabyle Fable. From Collection de Contes et Chansons Populaires.)

THE CLEVER APE AND THE FOOLISH WOLF

ONCE upon a time the Lion was roaming through the jungle like a mighty chief on his own land. He looked to the right; he looked to the left; he took two steps forward, then stopped, then went forward again. All at once an Ape saw the Lion and began imitating him and making fun of him. The Lion was angry and said:

"Get back to your place, Ape, and scratch yourself, and stop making fun of me or I will make a meal of you."

But the Ape, who is a tricky animal, swung safely onto a high branch, and there continued to make the same movements and take the same steps that the Lion was taking on the ground. And at this the Lion became very angry indeed.

Unluckily for the Ape at the very height of his grimaces and gambols he lost his balance and fell straight between the paws of the Lion, who seized him and was about to make an end of him with one powerful bite, when the idea came to him that it would be pleasanter to eat the Ape in company with a friend. Accordingly he flung his captive into a small cave, the mouth of which he closed with a large stone. After which he set out in search of a fellow-diner.

Once more alone and somewhat recovered from his fright, the Ape's first thought was, "How am I to get away?" So he set to work at the mouth of the cave; but the stone was too heavy to push aside, and too tight a fit for the Ape to squeeze past it. All his efforts were wasted and he was in despair.

All of a sudden, a Wolf chanced to pass that way and heard the

Ape howling desperately. The Wolf had lately quarrelled with the Ape and still owed him a grudge, so it pleased him to hear the Ape howling, and he asked, "Why are you making such an outcry?"

The Ape, who was quick-witted, saw that if he failed to trick the Wolf, he had lost his last chance, so he replied, "I am not crying, I am singing."

"Why are you singing?" asked the Wolf.

"To help my digestion, while I am waiting for the Rabbit, who has gone to get some more meat. This morning he and I arranged for a feast together, and we are to continue it all night. We have so much food here that I can eat no more; my stomach is too small. There are heaps of leavings all around me."

The Wolf, who is a born glutton, asked coaxingly, "You wouldn't refuse an old friend like me a share in the feast, would you?"

"No, indeed," answered the Ape, "Come right on into the Rabbit's hole, there is plenty of food for one more. But for fear any others should see us feasting, be careful to make no noise in rolling away the stone that closes the doorway." The Wolf obeyed, and the moment he rolled aside the stone and started to enter the cave, the Ape slipped between his legs and shoved back the stone, leaving the Wolf a prisoner.

Meanwhile the Lion arrived accompanied by his hungry friend. "Well, well!" said he, "So the Ape got out of the cave, after all! Never mind, we will eat the Wolf instead." And while they made their dinner off the Wolf, the clever Ape was dancing and gambolling in the tree-top, overjoyed at his success in tricking both of his enemies.

(Senegambian Fable. From Contes Populaires de la Sénégambie, by I. J. B. Béranger-Ferard.)

THE BOAR AND THE CHAMELEON

A BOAR, hunting for food, met a Chameleon at the foot of a tree. "Hello!" said the Boar, "you act as though you were half dead, dragging yourself along in that lazy way!"

"Don't be so proud of your strength, brother Boar," retorted the Chameleon, "I am a match for you any day!"

"Hold your tongue, you wretched little beast!" rejoined the Boar angrily. "If you think so well of yourself, will you run a race with me?"

"Of course I will," agreed the Chameleon readily. "Do you see that little hill over there? Let that be the goal."

"All right," said the Boar, and at once started to run. But the tricky little Chameleon caught hold of the Boar's tail. When the hill was reached, the Boar said, "Well, Chameleon, where are you now?"

"Here I am," said the Chameleon, who had been quick to let go of the Boar's tail and drop to earth.

"Well, you run faster than I thought you could," said the Boar. "Let's try again. This time I won't let myself be beaten!" So they ran again and the Chameleon repeated his trick and for the second time reached the goal at the same time as his enemy.

"Haha! haha! Where are you this time, little brother?" called the Boar gleefully.

"Here I am, big brother!" shouted back the tricky little Chameleon. And so the Boar, puzzled and ashamed, had to admit that the Chameleon had won the race.

(Madagascar Fable. From *Collection de Contes et de Chansons Populaires*, Vol. 38.)

THE GUINEA-HEN AND THE CROCODILE

IN the old days the Guinea-hen and the Crocodile were good friends and swam in the same waters. But one day the Crocodile said to his children, "I have eaten the flesh of all the animals on earth, excepting only that of the Guinea-hen. Now I am going to do my best to eat that also." So the Crocodile pretended to be dead, and said to his children, "Gather together and weep, and send for the Guinea-hen."

So the little Crocodiles went to the Guinea-hen and said to her: "Guinea-hen, our father, Ramamba, the Crocodile, is dead, and we have come to tell you, because you were his oldest friend."

Then the Guinea-hen gathered together all her family and said, "Oh, my children and my grandchildren, gather together, for we are going to the funeral of the old Crocodile, Ramamba."

When all the little Guinea-fowls had come together, the old Guinea-hen said, "The Crocodile wants to eat Guinea-fowls. When we go to the funeral, be sure not to go near him until you see me go near him, and don't sing until I tell you to."

Then all the family of Guinea-fowls set out for the funeral of the Crocodile. And the little Guinea-fowls and the little Crocodiles all greeted each other properly. Then the mother Guinea-hen said to the little Crocodiles, "Have you yet held the funeral of your father, Ramamba?"

"Not yet," answered the little Crocodiles. "We are still children, and we do not know the proper way to hold a funeral. That is why we sent for you and have waited until you came." Then the Guinea-hen said, "Sing, my children, while I talk to the Crocodile." Then

she turned to where the wily old Crocodile lay, stiff and silent as though he were dead, and asked him:

"Is it true, Ramamba, that you are dead? If it is true, move your feet, so that your children and grandchildren can see and can tell themselves, 'Ramamba is dead, and we must recite his great deeds. For he is now famous among dead heroes, and many are his deeds that must be told.' "

Ramamba, at this, moved his feet. Then all the little Guinea-chicks sang in chorus, "Mbitra! Mbitra!" and the mother Guinea-hen said:

"Ramamba, you have moved your feet! You, who are dead, nevertheless still move. Since you are really dead, Ramamba, open your jaws, and your children and grandchildren shall sing your praise." The Crocodile opened his jaws, and all the little Guinea-chicks again began singing, "Mbitra!"

"Ramamba," began the Guinea-hen again, "if you are really dead, open your eyes!" The Crocodile opened his eyes, looked at the Guinea-hen and said to himself, "To-day I shall certainly taste the flesh of a Guinea-hen!"

"Turn over on your other side," commanded the Guinea-hen, and Ramamba turned over. Then all the little Guinea-chicks ran together in a bunch and sang in chorus, "Ramamba meant to eat us all, but he shall never taste our flesh!"

"Our plans have all failed," said the Crocodile to his children, "we shall not have the feast we hoped for. But may my curse rest upon any one of my descendants who fails to eat a Guinea-fowl if he gets the chance!"

And for her part the Guinea-hen said, "If ever my children or grandchildren go into the water, may they be eaten by the Crocodile!"

When they must bathe, let them bathe in the dust, and when they would drink let them quench their thirst in the evening dew!"

That is why the Guinea-fowl never goes into the water; and that is why the Guinea-hen and the Crocodile are no longer friends.

(*Madagascar Fable. From Collection de Contes et de Chansons Populaires, Vol. 39.*)

THE GUINEA-FOWL AND THE HEN

ONE day when there was no rice left in the rice-fields, the Guinea-Fowl and the Hen stole potatoes to satisfy their hunger. They lighted a fire, and when the potatoes were roasted, the Hen said:

"I am going to carry the largest potatoes home with me, and eat only the little ones here in the field."

"And I," said the Guinea-Fowl, "shall be wiser than you. For I shall begin by eating all my biggest potatoes. So if the owner of the field finds us here, I can leave the small ones and fly away."

"The owner? The owner?" said the Hen, "I am not afraid of him! If the owner comes, I shall fly off too, and take my big potatoes with me!"

Thereupon the two friends settled down to their feast of potatoes. The Hen, according to her plan, picked out only the little ones, while the Guinea-Fowl chose only the largest. Presently the owner of the field passed that way and, discovering the two thieves, gave chase to them. The Guinea-Fowl at once took to flight, deserting her friend, the Hen. The latter, loaded down with her big potatoes, fell an easy prey to the farmer, who caught and took her home with him. That is how the Hen was domesticated by Man, while the Guinea-Fowl still runs wild.

(*Madagascar Fable. From Collection de Contes et de Chansons Populaires, Vol. 39.*)

THE CAT AND THE RAT

ONE day a Cat and a Rat wished to cross a river but were daunted by its width and the strength of its current. The Rat alone knew how to swim, and both were afraid of the Crocodiles. As for hiring a canoe, they could not think of such a thing, for they would have had to hire a canoe from some Man, and they were afraid of Men. At last they decided to make a canoe for themselves cut out of a large potato. While the Cat held the potato between her paws, the Rat hollowed it out with his teeth which were sharp as hatchets. When the canoe was finished they pushed it into the water and both stepped in. The Rat paddled because he was the younger. But after a while he grew tired and threw down the paddle; for it seemed as though the other side of the river was still a day's journey off.

"I am very hungry," said the Rat.

"Hungry? So am I," said the Cat.

"I am going to gnaw our canoe a little," said the Rat. "It is my natural food. Why should I go hungry while there is food within reach?" And he began to gnaw the potato.

"Have a care," said the Cat, "for if you gnaw too deep and wreck our canoe, you shall die with me."

The Rat promised not to gnaw the potato any more. But presently he quietly began again, and gnawed a little every time the Cat's head was turned; and whenever the Cat looked his way he hid with his body the hole that he had gnawed. At last the bottom of the canoe was gnawed so thin that it gave way, and began to fill with water. Instantly the Rat jumped into the river and swam to shore, escaping the Crocodiles. When he was safe on land he began laugh-

ing at the Cat as he watched her struggle and splutter the water from her nose. "If you go to the bottom," he called out, "give my regards to the fishes!"

The Cat was so angry that she felt that she would rather have drowned than live to be laughed at like that. In her rage she managed to struggle ashore, and before the Rat could make his escape, she pounced upon him, and seized him by the head.

"Mercy, Mercy!" cried the Rat! "If you must eat me, begin at my tail," for he wanted to see the light of day as long as possible.

"Don't bother me," said the Cat, and she promptly ate him up.

And to this day it is a common saying in Madagascar, "*Don't bother me*," said the Cat."

(*Madagascar Fable. From Collection de Contes et de Chansons Populaires, Vol. 38.*)

THE FROG'S SADDLE HORSE

ONCE upon a time the Elephant and the Frog went courting the same girl, and at last she promised to marry the Elephant. One day the Frog said to her,

"That Elephant is nothing but my saddle horse."

When the Elephant came to call that night the girl said to him:

"You are nothing but the Frog's saddle horse!"

When he heard this the Elephant went off at once and found the Frog, and asked him:

"Did you tell the girl that I am nothing but your saddle horse?"

"Oh, no indeed," said the Frog, "I never told her that!"

Thereupon they both started back together to see the girl. On the way the Frog said:

"Grandpa Elephant, I am too tired to walk any further. Let me climb up on your back."

"Certainly," said the Elephant, "Climb up, my grandson."

So the Frog climbed up on the Elephant's back. Presently he said:

"Grandpa Elephant, I am afraid that I am going to fall off. Let me take some little cords and fasten them to your tusks, to hold on by."

"Certainly, my grandson," said the Elephant; and he stood still while the Frog did as he had asked. Presently the Frog spoke again:

"Grandpa Elephant, please stop and let me pick a green branch so that I can keep the flies off of you."

"Certainly, my grandson," said the Elephant, and he stood quite still while the Frog broke off the branch. Pretty soon they drew near to the house where the girl lived. And when she saw them coming, the Elephant plodding patiently along with the little Frog perched on his broad back, holding the cords in one hand, and waving the green branch she came to meet them, calling out,

"Mr. Elephant, you certainly are nothing but the Frog's saddle horse!"

(From Folk Tales of Angola. By H. Chatelain.)

THE MAN AND THE CROCODILE

ONE year, during flood-time, when all the rivers overflowed their banks, a Crocodile was carried a long way from his own river, and landed so deep in the jungle that he could not find his way back to water. For many days he had nothing to drink or to eat, and so grew very thin. At last a hunter, looking for deer, met the Crocodile and asked:

"What are you doing here?"

The Crocodile told his story, and the hunter said:

"If you will promise not to hurt me, I will carry you back to your river."

The Crocodile promised; and the Hunter bound him with cord, put him on his head, and carried him back to the bank of the river. Then the Crocodile said:

"Since you have brought me as far as this, you may as well carry me down into the water." So the Hunter, still carrying the Crocodile, waded into the river up to his knees.

"As a favour go a little further," begged the Crocodile. So the Hunter went further, until the water was up to his breast.

"A little further still," begged the Crocodile, and he went on until the water was up to his neck. Then he unbound the cords and placed the Crocodile in the water, saying: "There now, are you satisfied?"

"Not yet," answered the Crocodile. "Not until I have eaten you," and he seized the unhappy Hunter, and held him tight.

"Is this my reward for bringing you so far, and saving your life?" asked the Hunter.

"I shall not eat you until we find some one who shall judge between us," answered the Crocodile.

Presently a Horse came down to the river to drink. The Crocodile said: "Don't drink until you have judged between us," and then told the Horse the facts of the case. The Horse replied:

"You should eat him, for a Man is a wicked creature. Ever since I was a colt, Men have mounted me, driven me, travelled on my back and maltreated me. Now that I am old, they no longer take the trouble to feed me."

The Crocodile said: "Let us find a second judge."

Next came a Cow; and when the case was stated to her, she said: "Eat the Man! Men milk me, drink my milk, and then neglect me

because I am old!" A Donkey next passed by and, being appealed to, said: "Eat the Man, and quickly! Men have always worked me hard, abused and half starved me! Now they desert me because I am old."

Last of all came a Rabbit. When asked for his judgment he said to the Crocodile: "How could a Man bring you here, a big creature like you?"

"All the same, he did it," answered the Crocodile.

"How did he do it?" asked the Rabbit.

"By binding me with cord, and carrying me through the jungle on his head."

The Rabbit told the Hunter to take the cord and show how he had bound the Crocodile. When this was done, the Hunter took the Crocodile once more on his head, and carried him back to the jungle where he had first found him. Then the Rabbit asked the Hunter: "Do you eat Crocodiles?"

"Yes," answered the Hunter.

"Then eat him, and quickly," advised the Rabbit. "Since the Crocodile intended to do you harm."

(Senegal Fable. From Collection de Contes et de Chansons Populaires.)

THE RAT AND THE TOAD

THE rat one day said to the toad: "I can do more than you; for you do not know how to run. You do nothing but hop—that is the only way you can run!"

When the toad heard these words of the rat, he said to him: "We will see whether you can do more than I. To-morrow I will do some-

thing; if you can do it without anything happening to you, then I will admit that you can do more than I."

The rat agreed to the toad's proposal.

The next day the toad waited until noon, when the sun was overhead and all the workmen went to sit down in the shade of a tree to eat their luncheon. Then he hopped over to the men and passed in and out among them.

"See that toad!" said one of the men; but no one wanted to touch him.

Then the toad hopped back to the rat.

"You saw what I did," said he. "Now you do the same."

The rat laughed at such a simple task, and ran at once across to the tree where the men were sitting in the shade.

But when the men saw him they exclaimed, "Here is a rat!" and they grabbed up sticks and tried to kill him. The poor rat barely managed to escape, and ran back, all bruised and sore, to where the toad was waiting.

"Brother Toad," said he, "I thought that I could do more than you; but you have shown me that you can indeed do more than I!"

No one can excel in every way.

(Bornu Fable. From African Native Literature, by the Rev. S. W. Koelle.)

PART II

AMERICAN INDIAN FABLES

THE THREE CRANBERRIES

THREE Cranberries were living in a lodge together. One was green, one was white and one was red. They were sisters. There was snow on the ground; and as the men were absent, they felt afraid and began saying: "What shall we do if the wolf comes?" "I," said the green one, "will climb up the *shingoub*, the spruce tree." "I," said the white one, "will hide myself in the kettle of boiled hominy." "And I," said the red one, "will hide myself under the snow." Presently the wolves came, and the Three Cranberries hid themselves as they had agreed. But only one of the Three had judged wisely. The wolves immediately ran to the kettle, and ate up the hominy, and with it the white Cranberry. The red one was trampled to pieces by their feet and her blood spotted the snow. But the green one that had climbed the thick spruce tree escaped notice and was saved.

(Chippewa Fable. From *Indian Tales and Researches*, by Henry R. Schoolcraft.)

THE BEAR AND THE RABBIT

THE Bear once invited the Rabbit to dine with him. They had beans in the pot but there was no fat to cook them with. So the Bear took his knife and cut a little slit in his tough skin under the thick fur, and let some of the fat run out until they had enough to cook the dinner. The Rabbit looked surprised and thought to himself,

"That is certainly a handy way to get fat. I think I will try it myself."

When the Rabbit started for home he invited the Bear to come and take dinner with him four days later. When the Bear came, on the appointed day, the Babbit said:

"I have beans for dinner, too. Now, I'll get the fat for them." So he took a knife, just as he had seen the Bear do, and pricked himself with it, but instead of oil all he got was a few drops of blood. The poor little Rabbit cried out, although he was more frightened than hurt. The Bear picked him up and bandaged the cut and then scolded the Rabbit roundly, "You little fool!" he said, "I am big and strong and lined with fat all over; the knife doesn't hurt me. But you are small and thin and weak, and you can't do such things!"

(Adapted from Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

THE OWL AND THE LEMMING

AN Owl saw a Lemming feeding just outside of his burrow. Accordingly, the Owl flew down from the tree and perched at the entrance to the burrow, and then said to the Lemming: "Two dog-teams are coming this way!" This frightened the Lemming so badly that he came up close to his burrow, pretending that he would rather be eaten by the Owl than caught by the dogs. He said, "I am very fat and you can have a good meal. Take me! But if you wish to celebrate before eating me, I will sing while you dance."

The Owl agreed to this; he drew himself up and the Lemming began to sing while the Owl danced. When dancing, the Owl looked up to the sky and quite forgot about the Lemming. While he was moving about, he spread his legs far apart, and instantly the Lem-

ming ran between them into his burrow. The Owl called to him to come out again, saying that the dog-teams had both passed by and were gone. But the Lemming's wife told her husband not to go out but to throw dirt in the Owl's face. And that was what he did.

(Eskimo Fable. From The Eskimo in Baffin Land, by Franz Boas.)

THE OWL AND THE TWO RABBITS

AN Owl saw two Rabbits playing close together and seized them both, one with each foot. But the Rabbits were too strong for him, and ran away, dragging the Owl with them. The Owl's wife shouted to him: "Let one of the Rabbits go and kill the other!" But the Owl replied, "The moon is waning and will soon disappear, and then we shall be hungry; we shall need both of them." The Rabbits ran on; and when they came to a boulder, one of the Rabbits ran to the right side, while the other ran to the left side of it. The Owl was not able to let go quickly enough and so was torn in two.

(From The Eskimo in Baffin Land, by Franz Boas.)

WHY THE BEARS HAVE SHORT TAILS

AT first all the Bears had long tails. One winter day the Bear met the Fox, who had a fine lot of Crawfish. Being hungry the Bear wanted some too; so he asked the Fox where and how he got his Crawfish. The Fox replied:

"Go and stick your tail down in the water and let it stay there until it pinches you. The more it hurts, the more fish you will have."

This was what the Bear had in mind to do: so he proceeded down to the lake and made a hole through the ice. Sitting over it, he let

his tail hang in the cold water. When it began to freeze, he felt a pain; but as he wanted to catch lots of fish, he did not stir until his tail was frozen fast in the ice. The Fox's instructions were not forgotten: so he suddenly jumped up in the expectation of getting heaps of fish; but he merely broke his tail off near the body instead. And ever since the Bears have had short tails.

(Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

THE MEASURE-WORM ROCK

THERE were once two little boys living in a valley, who went down to the river to swim. After paddling and splashing about to their heart's content, they went on shore and crept up a huge boulder that stood beside the water, on which they lay down in the warm sunshine to dry themselves. They soon fell asleep and slept so soundly that they never wakened more. Through sleeps, moons and snows, winter and summer, they slumbered on. Meanwhile the great Rock on which they slept was treacherously rising, day and night, little by little, until it soon bore them up beyond the sight of their friends, who sought them everywhere, weeping. Thus they were borne up at last beyond all human help or reach of human voice—lifted up, inch by inch, into the blue heavens—far up, far up, until their faces scraped the moon; and still they slumbered and slept, year after year. Then at length, upon a time, all the animals assembled together to bring down the little boys from the top of the mighty Rock. Every animal made a spring up the face of the wall as far as he could leap. The little Mouse could only jump up a hand-breadth, the Rat, two hand-breadths; the Raccoon, a little higher; and so on; the grizzly Bear making a prodigious leap far up the wall, but falling back, in vain like

all the others. Last of all, the Lion tried, and he jumped up higher than any other animal had; but he fell down flat on his back. Then came along Tultakana, the insignificant little Measure-Worm, which even the Mouse could have crushed by treading on it, and began to creep up the Rock. Step by step, step by step, a little at a time, he measured his way up, until presently he was above the Lion's jump; then, pretty soon, out of sight. So he crawled up and up and up, through many long sleeps, for about one whole snow, and at last he reached the top. Then he took the little boys, and came down the same way he went up, and brought them safe down to the ground. And so the Rock has ever since been called, Tutochanula after the name of Tultakana, the Measure-Worm.

What all the great animals of the forest could not do, the despised Measure-Worm accomplished, simply by patience and perseverance.

(Meewock Legend. From Northern California Indians, by Stephen Powers, in The Overland Monthly, 1872-74.)

THE CATFISH AND THE MOOSE

A MOOSE was walking along the river bank when he saw a Catfish. "Why are you lying there in the water?" he bellowed. "I came here because I chose to," said the little Catfish. "What business is it of yours? I was made to live in the water, and I have a perfect right to be here."

"Well, what's the good of your getting angry," demanded the Moose. "All I need to do is to kick you just once, and that will settle you. I have half a mind to do it, too." So saying, the Moose rushed headlong into the water; but just as he raised his leg to kick

the Catfish, the little animal rolled over on his back and pointed his horns at the Moose, crying: "Take that!"

The Moose stamped on the Catfish, and drove one of the horns way into his foot. The pain was so great that the Moose leaped clear out of the water onto the bank, and ran up into the woods. The wound from the Catfish's horns was like fire, and hurt him worse and worse. He lay down on the ground and rolled over and over, and presently he died.

It is wrong to despise any living thing, no matter how small and humble it appears to be.

(Menomoni Fable. From Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 13.)

THE PIGEON-HAWK AND THE TORTOISE

THE Pigeon-Hawk challenged the Tortoise to a race: but the Tortoise declined it unless the Hawk would consent to run several days' journey. The Hawk very quickly consented, and they immediately set out. The Tortoise knew that if he was to obtain the victory it must be by great diligence; so he went down into the earth and, taking a straight line, stopped for nothing. The Hawk, on the contrary, knowing that he could easily beat his competitor, kept carelessly flying this way and that way in the air, stopping to visit one friend and then another, till so much time had been lost that when he came in sight of the winning point, the Tortoise had just come up out of the earth and gained the prize.

(From Indian Tales and Researches, by Henry R. Schoolcraft, 1839.)

THE WIND AND THE DUCK

ON a bitterly cold day of winter, the Northwest Wind, rising, saw a solitary Duck diving through the few holes still remaining in the ice, near the shore of a great Bay.

"What folly!" blustered the Wind, "to try to resist me who have driven every other living creature away."

So saying, the Wind blew so hard and so cold that he froze over all the remaining holes, and forced the poor little Duck to take shelter under the lee of the bank. Satisfied with this success, the Wind retired, whistling, to his far-away home in the mountains. When he arose the next morning, he found, to his surprise, that the Duck had discovered some new holes and was pushing the reeds out of her way and diving as cheerfully as ever.

"This will never do," howled the Wind, "No Duck is going to get the best of me!"

So for a whole week the Wind blew, harder and harder, bleaker and bleaker every day. But regularly each morning, when he arose he found the little Duck steadily at work, seeking out or breaking new holes, or else patiently waiting for the ice to drift out of her way, and earning her living as best she could. At last the Wind said to himself:

"Such brave persistence deserves success. I may as well leave the Duck in peace."

(Indian Fable. From American Wonderland, by Richard Meade Bache, 1871.)

THE LYNX AND THE HARE

ONE day, in the dead of winter, when food was very scarce, a half starved Lynx discovered a modest little Hare standing on a high rock in the woods secure from any attack.

"Come down, my pretty one," said the Lynx, in a persuasive tone. "I have something to say to you."

"Oh, no, I can't," answered the Hare. "My mother has often told me to avoid strangers."

"Why, you sweet little obedient child," said the Lynx, "I am delighted to meet you! Because you see I happen to be your uncle. Come down at once and talk to me; for I want to send a message to your mother."

The Hare was so pleased by the friendliness of her pretended uncle and so flattered by his praise that, forgetting her mother's warning, she leaped down from the rock and was promptly seized and devoured by the hungry Lynx.

(Indian Fable. From American Wonderland, by Richard Meade Backe, 1871.)

THE WILDCAT AND THE RABBIT

THE Wildcat once caught the Rabbit and was about to kill him when the Rabbit begged for his life, saying: "I'm so small that I would make only a mouthful for you. But if you let me go I'll show you where you can get a whole drove of Turkeys." So the Wildcat let him up and went with him to where the Turkeys were. When they came near the place the Rabbit said to the Wildcat, "Now you must do as I say. Lie down as if you were dead and don't move."



leader, and they wanted to learn the latest dance; so they agreed to let him show them, and made a ring about him while he got ready. The Rabbit patted his feet and began to dance around in a circle, singing:

"On the edge of the field I dance about,
Hania lil! lil! Hania lil! lil!"

"Now," said the Rabbit, "when I sing, 'On the edge of the field,' I dance that way," and he danced over in the direction where he pointed—"and when I sing, 'lil! lil!' you must all stamp your feet hard." The Wolves thought it fine. Presently the Rabbit began another round, singing the same song, and danced a little nearer to the field, while the Wolves all stamped their feet. He sang louder and louder, and danced nearer and nearer to the field, until, at the fourth song, when the Wolves were stamping their very hardest and thinking only of the song, the Rabbit made one jump and was off through the long grass. The Wolves were after him at once, but he ran for a hollow stump and climbed up inside the hollow. When the Wolves reached the stump, one of them thrust his head inside and looked up. But the Rabbit spit down at him, and he had to draw back. The other Wolves were afraid to try, and they all went away, leaving the Rabbit safe in the stump.

(*From Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.*)

HOW THE TERRAPIN ESCAPED FROM THE WOLVES

THE 'Possum and the Terrapin went together to hunt persimmons, and found the tree full of ripe fruit. The 'Possum climbed the tree and was throwing down the persimmons to the Terrapin, when a Wolf came up and began to snap up the persimmons as

fast as they fell, before the Terrapin could reach them. The 'Possum watched his chance and at last managed to throw down a very large persimmon, which stuck in the Wolf's throat and choked him to death.

"I'll cut his ears off for hominy spoons," said the Terrapin, and having done so, started for home with them, leaving the 'Possum still eating persimmons up the tree. After a while the Terrapin came to a house and was invited in to have some hominy gruel from the jar that is always set outside the door. He sat down beside the jar and dipped up the gruel with one of the Wolf's ears for a spoon. The people noticed and wondered. When he had eaten enough, he went on, and soon came to another house and was asked to have some more hominy. He dipped it up again with the wolf's ear and went on when he had had enough. Soon the news spread that the Terrapin had killed the Wolf and was using his ears for spoons. Accordingly all the Wolves gathered together and followed the Terrapin's trail until they came up with him and made him prisoner. Then they held a council to decide what to do with him, and agreed to boil him in a clay pot. They brought in the pot; but the Terrapin only laughed at it and said that if they put him into that thing, he would kick it all to pieces. Then they said that they would burn him in the fire, but the Terrapin laughed again and said that he would put the fire out. Then they decided to throw him into the deepest hole in the river and drown him. This time the Terrapin did not laugh, but begged and begged them not to do such a dreadful thing. But the Wolves paid no attention to his prayers, but dragged him down to the river and threw him in. This was just what the Terrapin had been waiting for all the time, and he dived into the water and came up on the other side of the river and got safely away.

(From Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

HOW THE REDBIRD GOT HIS COLOUR

AS a Raccoon was passing a Wolf one day he made several insulting remarks, until at last the Wolf became very angry and turned and chased him. The Raccoon ran his best and managed to reach a tree by the riverside before the Wolf came up. He climbed the tree and stretched himself out on a limb overhanging the water. When the wolf arrived, he saw the reflection of the Raccoon below the limb in the water; and, thinking that it was the Raccoon himself, he jumped at it and was nearly drowned before he could scramble out again, all wet and dripping. He lay down on the bank to dry, and presently fell asleep. While he was sleeping, the Raccoon came down the tree and plastered both of the Wolf's eyes with clay. When the Wolf woke, he found that he could not open his eyes, and began to whine. Along came a little Brown Bird through the bushes and, hearing the Wolf whining, asked what was the matter. The Wolf told his story and said, "If you will help me get my eyes open, I will show you where to find some fine red paint to paint yourself with."

"All right," said the Brown Bird. So he pecked at the Wolf's eyes until he got off all the clay that the Raccoon had plastered them with. Then the Wolf took the Brown Bird to a rock that had bright streaks of red paint running through it, and the little bird painted himself and ever since has been a Redbird.

(From Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

THE HUMMING-BIRD AND THE CRANE

THE Humming-bird and the Crane were both in love with the same pretty girl. She preferred the Humming-bird, who was as pleasing to look at as the Crane was awkward. But the Crane was so persistent that in order to get rid of him she finally told him that he must challenge the other bird to a race and that she would marry the winner. The Humming-bird was so swift—almost like a flash of lightning—and the Crane so slow and heavy, that she felt sure the Humming-bird would win. She did not know that the Crane could fly at night.

They agreed to start at her house and fly around the circle of the world, back to the starting point. And the one who came in first should win the girl. When the word was given, the Humming-bird darted off like an arrow and was out of sight in a moment, leaving his rival to follow heavily behind. He flew all day, and when evening came and he stopped to roost for the night, he was far ahead. But the Crane flew steadily all night long, passing the Humming-bird soon after midnight, and going on until he came to a creek, where he stopped to rest about daybreak. The Humming-bird woke up in the morning and flew on again thinking how easily he would win the race. But when he reached the creek, there he found the Crane, spearing tadpoles with his long bill for breakfast. The Humming-bird was much surprised and wondered how this could have happened; but he flew swiftly by and soon left the Crane once more out of sight.

The Crane finished his breakfast and again started on; and when evening came he still kept on as before. This time it was not yet mid-

night when he passed the Humming-bird sleeping on a limb; and in the morning he had finished his breakfast before the other came up. The next day he gained a little more; and on the fourth day he was spearing tadpoles for dinner when the Humming-bird passed him. On the fifth and sixth days it was late in the afternoon before the Humming-bird overtook him; and on the seventh morning the Crane was a whole night's travel ahead. He took his time at breakfast and then fixed himself up spick and span at the creek, arriving at the starting-point about the middle of the morning. When the Humming-bird at last came in, it was afternoon and he had lost the race. But the girl declared that she would never have such an ugly fellow for a husband, so she stayed single.

(From Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

HOW THE DEER GOT HIS HORNS

IN the beginning the Deer had no horns, but his head was as smooth as that of a doe. He was a great runner, and the Rabbit was a great jumper; and all the other animals were curious to know which of the two could go further in the same time. They talked about it a good deal, and at last arranged a match between them, and made a fine, large pair of antlers as a prize for the winner. The Deer and the Rabbit were to start together from one side of a thicket and go through it, and turn and come back again—and the one who came out first was to receive the horns.

On the day fixed for the race all the animals were there, with the antlers put down on the ground at the edge of the thicket, to mark the starting point. While everybody was admiring the horns, the Rabbit said: "I don't know this part of the



ficient to roast him had been prepared he would come out and be roasted; that he did not want to be eaten raw.

The Wildcat built the fire as directed; and when the sticks were burned to coals, he settled himself on his haunches and notified the Rabbit that all was ready, whereat the Rabbit gave a spring, striking all his feet into the coals, knocking them into the face and over the breast of the Wildcat, and then escaping. This burned the hair in spots on the Cat's breast, and when it grew out again it was white. This is why the Wildcat has white spots on his breast.

(Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

THE RABBIT AND THE 'POSSUM AFTER A WIFE

THE Rabbit and the 'Possum each wanted a wife, but no one would marry either of them. They talked over the matter, and the Rabbit said:

"We can't get wives here; let's go to the next settlement. I'm the messenger for the council and I'll tell the people that I bring an order that everybody must take a mate at once, and then we'll be sure to get our wives."

The 'Possum thought this a fine plan, so they started off together to the next town. As the Rabbit travelled faster he got there first and waited outside until the people noticed him and took him into the townhouse. When the Chief came to ask his business the Rabbit said he brought an important order from the council that everybody must get married without delay. So the Chief called the people together and told them the message from the council. Every animal took a mate at once, and the Rabbit got a wife.

The 'Possum travelled so slowly that he got there after all the ani-

mals had mated, leaving him still without a wife. The Rabbit pretended to feel sorry for him, and said:

"Never mind, I'll carry the message to the people in the next settlement, and you hurry on as fast as you can, and this time you will get your wife."

So he went on to the next town, and the Possum followed close after him. But when the Rabbit got to the townhouse he sent out the word that, as there had been peace so long that everybody was getting lazy, the council had ordered that there must be war at once and they must begin right in the townhouse. So they all began fighting, but the Rabbit made four great leaps and got away just as the Possum came in. Everybody jumped on the Possum, who had not thought of bringing his weapons on a wedding trip, and so could not defend himself. They had nearly beaten the life out of him when he fell over and pretended to be dead until he saw a good chance to jump up and get away. The Possum never got a wife, but he remembers the lesson, and ever since he shuts his eyes and pretends to be dead when the hunter has him in a close corner.

(Myths of the Cherokee, by James Mooney.)

THE MINK, THE PIKE AND THE PICKEREL

ONCE a Mink was running along the bank of a river when he saw a Pickerel basking in the water close to the shore. He gaped at the Pickerel and licked his chops. "Oh, how I wish I could eat that one," he thought; but he hesitated to jump at it: "My, no, he's too big." So at last the Mink started off disappointed.

He trotted along and presently came to a place where he saw another huge fish close to the shore. This time it was an enormous

Pike. The Mink gaped at him too. "Oh, how I wish I could eat that one. Oh, if I could only eat either one of the two wouldn't I have a full stomach?" But the Mink dared not tackle the Pike any more than the Pickerel. "But isn't there some way I can manage it?" he thought in his heart. "Perhaps I can fix it so as to get one of them. If I could only start them fighting, then perhaps one would kill the other, and I could eat that one."

So the Mink went back to the Pickerel and found him still basking in the spot where he had first seen him. "Pickerel," he called down to him, "The Pike is telling lies about you." The Pickerel answered, "What right has he to speak of me at all? Such an ugly looking fish too, with whitish eyes!" The Mink trotted back to where he had left the Pike. "Pike, Pickerel is telling lies about you!" The Pike called back in answer, "What business has he to speak of me at all?—A fish with such a long homely jaw!" The Mink ran back to the Pickerel and tattled again. "How dare he lie about me? He is an ugly, short-bodied, pot-bellied beast," said Pickerel. The Mink hurried back to the Pike. "Say Pike, Pickerel is lying about you again." This time the Pike was very angry indeed, and uttering the worst curse that a fish can, he said, "How dare he talk like that? A thing with spots on him! Oh, you bad Pickerel! I know that Mink is telling the truth!" Mink ran back and tattled some more. "Pickerel is at it again, telling more lies about you!" "Well, then, he and I will have to fight it out," was the reply.

Mink ran back and said, "Pickerel is on his way up-stream to fight you." "All right, I'll fight him," said Pike, and he started down stream. The two fish met half-way and fought, while the Mink stood on the bank and watched. They bit each other and rolled over and over, churning up the water. As they rolled Mink could see the

gleam of their white bellies plainly. "I wonder how it will come out," he kept repeating to himself. The two fish raged on for quite a while. At last they were so tired that they could hardly throw each other. "Perhaps they are nearly played out already," said Mink.

After a while the Mink saw that both fish were exhausted, and only their fins moved. They lay floating with their undersides turned uppermost. "Oh, they've killed each other, they're both done for! Well, I may as well roll up my leggings and wade in." So the Mink waded in and dragged the two heavy fish, one after the other, high up on the bank. Then he started a fire, and arranged a grill of branches over the flame. When the fish were cooked the Mink started in to eat them. He ate and ate, and presently his stomach felt fuller than it had ever felt before.

Those who listen to tale-bearers are likely to be drawn into foolish quarrels.

(From Menomoni Folk-lore, by Skinner and Satterlee.)

THE LINNET AND THE EAGLE

THE Birds met together one day to try which could fly highest. Some flew up very swiftly, but soon got tired and were passed by others of stronger wing. But the Eagle went up beyond them all, and was ready to claim victory, when a grey Linnet, a very small bird, flew from the Eagle's back where it had perched unperceived, and being fresh and unexhausted succeeded in going highest. When the Birds came down and met in council to award the prize, it was given to the Eagle because that Bird had not only gone up nearer to the sun than any of the other Birds, but had carried the Linnet on its back.

(Ojibway Fable.)



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